



**VCU** Division of  
Student Affairs

# Virginia Commonwealth University

**Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations [Edgar Part 86]**

**Biennial Review**

**Academic Years 2022-2023 & 2023-2024**

Report Created by the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Committee

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**December 2024**



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## **Introduction**

This document is the 2022-2024 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024) Biennial Review of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention programs. In accordance with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, this report is written on a biennial basis in order to assure the AOD standards of conduct (as outlined in the VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy) are enforced consistently throughout the University. Recommendations for revising AOD programs are included. This report is written by the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Committee and approved by the University Provost and President.

## **Background**

The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (1989) mandates that institutions of higher education implement AOD education and prevention programs for students and employees as a condition of receiving federal funds. The law stipulates that institutions of higher education develop, distribute, and enforce policy related to unlawful or unauthorized alcohol and other drugs manufacture, use, dispensation, possession, and distribution. In addition, it states that institutions of higher education must review their prevention programs biennially to determine their effectiveness and to determine the consistency and fairness of alcohol and other drugs policy enforcement. VCU also complies with the Drug Free Workplace Act (1988), which prohibits illegal drug or alcohol-related activity by employees in the workplace.

Since the inception of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Committee at VCU, a minimum of sixteen biennial reviews have been conducted. With each review, it was determined that AOD policy was being enforced fairly and consistently within the university and that a wide range of prevention programs were in place.

Recommendations were made by the committee in those reviews to enhance policy application and prevention programming. Biennial Reviews are kept for a minimum of ten years and are available upon requests from the Division of Student Affairs.

## **Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Committee**

The Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Committee (AODAC) was created in 1989 by the VCU Provost with the charge of overseeing university policy issues concerning alcohol and other drugs. The committee wrote the "VCU Alcohol and Other Drug Policy" that complies with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA) and Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Regulations Part 86.

## Committee Charge

AODAC is charged by the Provost with:

- Conducting the biennial review of VCU's AOD prevention programs to determine program efficacy and make recommendations to changes in programming if necessary.
- Ensuring that the disciplinary actions described in the VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy are consistent and fairly enforced.
- Submitting a report to the Provost that includes recommendations for strengthening VCU's prevention/support programs, intervention programs, and disciplinary procedures.
- Assisting with the implementation of approved recommendations by consulting with appropriate academic or administrative units.
- Overseeing the VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy revisions as needed, with input from other university organizations, including the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, and Human Resources.

## Committee Members during the 2022-2024 Biennium

The following is the committee membership of the AODAC during the time period when this report was compiled.

- **Dr. Charles Klink** Associate Vice Provost for Holistic Well-Being, Student Affairs
- **Tom Bannard** Assistant Director Substance Use and Recovery Support, Rams in Recovery, Co-Chair
- **Dr. Trisha Saunders** Senior Associate Director for Programs & Assessment, RecWell, Co-Chair
- **Meredith Hawkins** Director, RecWell
- **Dr. Jihad Aziz** Director, University Counseling Services
- **Dr. Karen Belanger** Asst. Dean & Director, Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
- **Carole Dowell** Director, University Student Commons
- **Ishnelia Moore** Director of Employee Relations and Performance Management, VCU Human Resources
- **Gavin Roark** Executive Director, Residential Life and Housing
- **Dr. Tricia Smith** Assistant Professor, Biology
- **John Venuti** Associate Vice President for Public Safety and Chief of Police, VCU and VCU Health
- **Andy Riddler** Orientation and Transition Programs
- **Malorie Yeaman** Title IX Coordinator, VCU Equity and Access Services
- **Dr. Megan Becker** Director of Residential Life, Residential Life & Housing
- **Rachael Tully** Assistant Dean of Students, Dean of Student Advocacy
- **Dr. Shannan Green** Director, University Student Health Services
- **Dr. Joe Wheeless** Assistant Dean and Director, Fraternity & Sorority Life
- **Donald Clark** Occupational Safety Manager, Safety and Risk Management
- **Dr. Gerry Moeller** Professor, Psychiatry
- **Dr. Karen Chartier** Associate Professor, School of Social Work
- **Nicole Dailey** Major, VCU Police
- **Kelvin Igumbor** AVP Employee Relations, Human Resources VCUMC
- **Trinity Katz** VCU Student

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## **Overview of Efforts for AOD Prevention**

The following are prevention, early intervention and recovery support efforts currently in place at VCU for the 2022-2024 biennium. These efforts have evolved throughout the years to keep pace with best practices and to further research in the field of harm reduction. Many different divisions and groups at VCU such as the Division of Student Affairs, the Center for Community Engagement and Impact, the Division of Academic Affairs, VCU Police Department, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, VCU Human Resources, VCU Health System, and VCUHS Human Resources all play a crucial role in prevention/intervention efforts. The Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Committee strives to share information between these key groups. The Division of Student Affairs houses most of the efforts targeting students. These student-focused offices include RecWell, University Counseling Services, University Student Health Services, Residential Life and Housing, University Student Commons and Activities, Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, and the Dean of Student Advocacy Office.

### **DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**

The majority of offices working on AOD prevention, intervention, and recovery for VCU students are housed in the Division of Student Affairs (DSA).

#### **Vice President for Student Affairs Office**

Dr. Chuck Klink, Associate Vice President, serves on the executive council of the Virginia Higher Education Substance Abuse Advisory Committee (VHESUAC). The VHESUAC provides statewide coordination for higher education on substance misuse education, prevention and intervention; coordinates statewide data collection; and establishes reporting guidelines for such institutions. The VHESUAC report for fiscal year ending on June 30, 2023 is available at the following link:

<https://www.abc.virginia.gov/library/education/pdfs/2023-vhesuac-annual-report-final.pdf>

VCU was also recognized in 2023 through the VHESUAC Recognition Program.

#### **Dean of Student Advocacy Office and Care Team**

The Dean of Student Advocacy Office aims to help students chart a path toward success, overcome barriers as they arise, and ensure proper support services are utilized as needed. The Dean of Student Advocacy Office advocates for and assists students dealing with life situations impacting their academic and personal success at VCU. In addition to advocating for individual students, the Dean of Student Advocacy office engages with student organizations, faculty, staff, and community partners to identify and address collective student concerns.



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The Care Team is coordinated by the Dean of Student Advocacy Office and serves the university and individual students by coordinating prevention, intervention, and support efforts to assist students involved in psychological distress, harm to self, and hospitalizations due to mental health concerns or physical illness or injury. The Care Team provides a centralized mechanism to review concerns and address student needs through a variety of interventions, referrals, and follow-ups. The team is composed of key personnel from the Division of Student Affairs, University Counseling Services, University Student Health Services, Student Conduct & Academic Integrity, Residential Life & Housing, Recreation and Well-Being, VCU Police, Academic Affairs, and other units as deemed appropriate. The team meets weekly and is available to faculty, staff, or students for case consultation to address significant student situations. Concerns are submitted via an [online report form](#).

Maxient is the secure database utilized for university case management for general student care and student conduct issues. Maxient also serves as the primary reporting system for a variety of offices including the Dean of Student Advocacy, Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, Residential Life and Housing to better coordinate student care. The database has been utilized since 2012.

### **VCU Recreation and Well-Being (RecWell)**

The mission of RecWell is to advance student success by empowering the VCU community to prioritize well-being, connect with others, and learn through play. As part of the departmental strategic plan, RecWell identified key goals and outcomes that guided the subsequent work related to alcohol and other drugs prevention and early intervention efforts during the current biennium. Key RecWell outcomes related to preventing alcohol and other drug use related harm among students and the VCU community are included in this review.

#### *Ongoing Educational Programs*

RecWell works to develop students into more effective, healthful leaders and team members in all aspects of their lives. During this biennium, RecWell partnered with staff from Orientation to train orientation leaders and create specific messaging for incoming students during orientation related to alcohol and other drugs.

RecWell has a robust Peer Health Education program that has continued to grow over the past two years. In 2022, a decision was made to fund wages for Peer Health Educators (PHEs), transitioning them from volunteers to paid student employees. Additionally, in partnership with the School of Education, RecWell began offering a Concepts in Peer Health Education three credit academic course open to all students. This course also served as part of the ongoing required training for PHEs in their roles. Additionally, PHEs are required to obtain certification through NASPA as Peer Educators. PHEs are instrumental in providing education and resources to incoming students through orientation, redzone programming, and collaboration with LiveWell, RecWell's living learning residential community.

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One of the main focus areas of the PHEs during this biennium was to continue to facilitate peer-to-peer education related to alcohol and other drugs. Between 2022-2024, RecWell PHEs facilitated 151 in-person programs on a variety of topics such as alcohol and other drugs, mental health, and well-being during this biennium.

Nine students enrolled in the course in Spring, 2023 and 18 in Spring, 2024. 20 students were recruited into the PHE program upon successful completion of the course.

RecWell contributes to the overall well-being of our VCU community through fun, safe, and health-sustaining policies, programs, practices, and spaces. Distinct from the Peer Health Education program the RecWell Health Promotion team, in partnership with other departments at VCU, hosted events each year focused on promoting well-being and educating students about alcohol and other drug use issues. These large-scale events included a Mental Health Resource Fair, National Alcohol Screening Day, National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week, and Planet RecWell. In 2023, 139 students attended the National Alcohol Screening Day event, with 66 students participating in screening for their substance use at the event. Of the 93 students who completed an assessment, 100% were able to name two VCU resources that they connected with that could support their well-being, and name 3 ways to party safer (e.g. stay with friends, plan for a safe ride home, keep track of beverages, etc.).

RecWell provided safer spaces and alternatives to alcohol and other drug use through staffing late-night hours and providing innovative programming. In 2022-2023, RecWell received a program grant through the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control to provide a series of late-night events to VCU students. Nearly 2,000 students attended one of the six "After Dark" events, not including our 30 student staff who were working at each event who also benefited from the educational activities. VCU RamsConnect, an online student engagement platform, was used to track attendance at the other non-RecWell events. We worked with campus partners, VCU Residential Life and Housing, VCU First and Second Year Experiences & Transitions, and VCU Student Commons and Activities to partner on additional events throughout the year where we offered alcohol and other life skills education. For the other events that we tracked, we had almost 150 students attend. We primarily targeted first and second year students for all of our events. 97% of participants were able to share one new thing that they learned while participating in an "After Dark" event. Responses were thematically coded, with the most common responses being collapsed into 4 larger themes: Knowledge that contributes to safer alcohol consumption, Strategies for safer alcohol consumption, Resources at VCU, and Life Skills (ie. stress management, connecting with others).

In addition to targeted alcohol and other drug events, Cary Street Gym and the MCV Campus Recreation & Aquatic Center were both open for late night hours throughout the week. The department also intentionally offered facility reservations and co-programmed activities for Rams in Recovery, first and second year students, and students living in residence halls on weekend nights to provide alternative programming.

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The indoor climbing wall, Outdoor Adventure Program (OAP) off-campus recreation trips (held most evenings and weekends), and intramural sports offered students an opportunity for low or no cost alternatives to using alcohol or other drugs. Policies for RecWell sport clubs, a traditionally high-risk population, continued to not permit any alcohol use by any members, whether of legal drinking age or not, during practices, meetings, sanctioned travel, or matches. In Spring 2024, all sport club Presidents and Vice Presidents (or designees) were required to attend a hazing prevention training, which also included information on alcohol use in hazing scenarios.

### *Passive Education*

In order to provide ongoing education and resources for students not in proximity to campus or able to attend in-person events, RecWell continued to offer several Health Foundations Learning Modules during this biennium designed to provide self-paced learning on topics such as alcohol, bystander engagement, and well-being.

RecWell continued to run a Social Norms Marketing Campaign related to alcohol consumption at VCU during the biennium. The objective of this campaign each year is to reduce the discrepancy between perceived and actual behavior related to alcohol consumption among VCU students by providing researched, consistent, and engaging norms messages using a multifaceted social norms marketing approach. During the 2022-2024 Biennium, the Stall Seat Journal (SSJ), a poster focused on social norms marketing, was posted monthly in over 1,400 bathrooms across both campuses during the semester, with several special editions tailored to first year students in residence halls posted during RedZone and other higher risk times throughout the year. Campaign messages are created using National College Health Assessment (NCHA) data, and data from the National Social Norms Center's UCelebrate Survey conducted at VCU in Fall, 2022. RecWell created and sustained the "Have You Herd?," campaign with additional posters and norms messages circulated in various facilities, on social media, and across other digital platforms.

### *Early Intervention*

RecWell launched an online alcohol self-assessment tool in 2022, which provides personalized feedback and resources for students to assist them with evaluating their personal relationship with alcohol and other drugs. Since the launch, 70 individuals have completed the anonymous self-assessment.

RecWell provided early intervention appointments to 306 unique students during the 2022-2024 biennium. In October 2022, RecWell launched Well-Being Coaching for students to replace the Brief Alcohol and Cannabis Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS/CASICS) program. The Recwell Well-Being Coaching program was designed as a preventative and early intervention tool to help students reflect on and leverage their own strengths and other available VCU resources to meet their self-articulated well-being goals.



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Using a whole-student approach to well-being, the program recognizes that students' relationships with alcohol and other drugs can often be impacted by their well-being in other areas, such as their ability to cope effectively with stressors. Well-Being Coaches are trained to use the principles of Brief Motivational Interviewing (BMI) to help students explore their own readiness for change and to support them as they develop a well-being plan that works for them. This program was offered primarily to students who were sanctioned for violating VCU's Alcohol and Other Drugs policy and includes a self-assessment and one-hour sessions of one-on-one, personalized motivational enhancement sessions with a well-being coach. Well-Being Coaching incorporates many of the same tools and features of the BASICS/CASICS program, which is listed on the NIAAA CollegeAIM matrix as a highly effective individual intervention strategy related to alcohol and other drug use (NIAAA, 2019), it was just expanded to include a whole-student focus.

### **University Counseling Services (UCS)**

Individual Counseling: University Counseling Services (UCS) provides brief treatment for enrolled students with mild substance use disorders as appropriate. Counseling Services has a substance use specialist who has expertise on Substance Use Disorders. Students who present with moderate or severe substance use disorders are referred to external community providers. University Counseling Services is also home to VCU's Collegiate Recovery Program Rams in Recovery.

### **Rams in Recovery / Collegiate Recovery Program**

Rams in Recovery has quickly grown to be the largest Collegiate Recovery Program in the state of Virginia with more than 120 active students. Recovery supports have continued to grow substantially on the campus, and they now include 10 recovery meetings on campus per week and a Family Education Program that is open to the community. The recovery program has trained more than 2,000 faculty, staff, and students in an innovative three hour "Recovery Ally" Program and in 2023-2024 led campus wide efforts to train more than 1,800 people to use the lifesaving drug Naloxone. Rams in Recovery provides coursework, programming, a dedicated space, activities, recovery housing, and recovery advocacy for students. Additionally, in 2019, Rams in Recovery created a seminar and scholarship program called The Recovery Scholars. The program has grown to more than 90 students who participate in weekly supportive seminars with their peers and receive a scholarship each semester.

Rams in Recovery leads a statewide initiative to expand Collegiate Recovery at 8 additional campuses in Virginia and hosts 4 state wide retreats annually.

Rams in Recovery has a large physical space on campus and has expanded recovery coaching Services to provide 1 on 1 recovery coaching to more than 75 students in 2023-2024. Rams in Recovery trains its staff members as Peer Recovery Support Specialists using the state curriculum and also trains trainers of the curriculum across the state.

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### **University Student Health Services (USHS)**

University Student Health Services (USHS) is committed to supporting students by integrating substance use screenings into the assessment process during initial patient visits. This proactive approach extends to mental health consultations, where routine screenings for substance use are conducted. Our staff provides brief interventions, education, and referrals for treatment as needed, ensuring a comprehensive approach to student wellness. To assist students with nicotine use reduction or cessation, USHS offers nicotine replacement therapy along with brief sessions focused on effective strategies and treatments. Additionally, USHS provides access to a psychiatrist, by referral, who can address mental health concerns that may contribute to substance use. Moving forward, USHS aims to enhance collaboration with campus and community resources to create a more robust support network for students navigating substance use challenges.

### **Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI)**

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity administers the Student Code of Conduct and the VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy as they pertain to student conduct. If students are found to have violated university policy, the office may refer them to an alcohol education program as a component of their University sanction. The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students is responsible for administering the Procedure for Parental Notification of Alcohol/ Other Drug Policy Violations - his designees in Student Conduct and Academic Integrity and Residential Life and Housing Conduct & Care, notify parents/guardians of students under the age of 21 who are found responsible for violating alcohol or other drug policies.

RAMS L.E.A.D: In Fall 2013 Student Conduct and Academic Integrity introduced a program on ethics and decision making. RAMS L.E.A.D. (Learning Ethics and Decision-making) consists of two, one-hour class sessions designed to help VCU students develop their own personal and ethical decision making and relate those to their long- and short-term goals. The class utilizes presentations, in-class activities and discussions, as well as assignments outside of class to assist students in this development. Students who successfully complete the program are better able to examine their own decisions and goals as well as understand and articulate the responsibility of being a VCU community member.

A position was added to address organizational conduct including alcohol and other drug misuse as well as establishing a weekly organization case coordination team.

### **University Student Commons**

The University Student Commons and Activities houses hundreds of student organizations, provides leadership and volunteer opportunities for students, and offers evening and weekend programming that is alcohol free.

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### **Fraternity & Sorority Life**

During this biennium, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life continued to operate as a departmental unit in the Division of Student Affairs. Two Assistant Directors were hired to complete the staffing of three full-time professionals in the department. In 2023, the department was moved to report to the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Student Advocacy along with other units that engaged in student support, hazing prevention, and policy work. The Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life was elevated to Assistant Dean and Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life to represent the new reporting structure. The office was integral in implementing hazing prevention training as required by Adam's Law which includes education on alcohol consumption, bystander intervention, and a review of relevant state law and university policy.

### **Residential Life and Housing**

Annually, Residential Life and Housing (RLH) addresses the topic of alcohol and drugs proactively through orientation presentations, floor meetings, and educational programming throughout the year, and reactively through conduct and care follow-up meetings. The RLH staff receives specific training each August and January around recognizing the presence and/or use of illicit drugs and alcohol in their communities and addressing the behavior through education and accountability. Sanctions levied by RLH for violations of the alcohol and drug policy provide opportunities for reflection, education regarding policy expectations and risk reduction, and connection with campus partners (RecWell). These sanctions typically include probation, deferred contract cancellation and/or loss of housing privileges, an alcohol/drug education class, and reflective papers. RLH and Student Conduct and Academic Integrity track drug and alcohol-related infractions in Maxient and refer students to appropriate resources.

### **VCU HUMAN RESOURCES – EDUCATION AND PREVENTION**

VCU Human Resources provides alcohol and other drug policy information, education, consultation, and referrals for VCU employees. The university's Alcohol and Other Drugs policy was updated in December 2021.

Consultations with Employee Relations specialists are provided to assist managers who have employees with potential substance misuse problems. Problem behaviors are addressed through counseling and disciplinary action. Staff may also meet with employees who divulge a substance misuse problem and refer them to VCU Human Resources for information on benefits, leave, the Employee Assistance Program, or appropriate community resources for assistance. Employees are also referred to RamStrong for mental health and wellbeing resources.

VCU Employee Health Services' staff work with managers and Human Resources to assess issues and options regarding employees potentially misusing substances. Such assessments may include drug or alcohol testing, counseling, and referral.

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The staff also works with Human Resources and other departments to provide education regarding potential misuse symptoms and resolution of alcohol and other drug issues in the workplace. The Employee Health Services Director also serves as the Medical Review Officer for the VCU Health System's pre-placement and for cause drug testing program.

### **VCU HEALTH SYSTEM HUMAN RESOURCES**

VCU Health System Human Resources' (VCUHS) staff consult with managers who have employees with potential substance use disorders. Problem behaviors are addressed through counseling, discipline, and referrals to treatment programs including the Health System's EAP (Employee Assistance Program) or Helplink, as applicable or appropriate on a case by case basis. Helplink is a free and confidential counseling service that is contributed through the Department of Psychiatry as a benefit for VCUHS employees and their family members who may have substance misuse and other emotional, psychiatric, or behavioral problems.

Licensed staff suspected of substance use problems are also referred to the Health Practitioners Monitoring Program, which is an impairment monitoring program created by the General Assembly to assist healthcare providers in addressing substance misuse and other impairment issues with the goal of helping them return to safe practice.

### **VCU NEIGHBORHOOD TEAM**

Led by VCU's Center for Community Engagement and Impact (CEI), the Neighborhood Team is comprised of various departments that are in daily contact with students, such as VCU Police and Off-Campus Student Services.

Nine neighborhood liaisons represent VCU's surrounding neighborhoods and meet regularly with the neighborhood team to discuss issues of concern and opportunities for collaboration. Jointly, the team attended more than 50 area neighborhood association meetings annually.

The surrounding community is invited to the Monroe Park Campus Neighborhood Forum, highlighted by remarks from VCU president Michael Rao. University leaders update the community on academics, collaborative programming, and capital improvements. Other community meetings to elicit community input are scheduled as needed and are often related to capital plans or the Master Plan.

Neighborhood beautification and cleanup projects and the community work study program continue to provide mutually beneficial opportunities for student-neighborhood collaboration.

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## Academic Programs and Research

Many VCU academic departments offer courses both on the undergraduate and graduate level for alcohol and other drug related issues. Some departments offer a few courses with related content and several schools within the University provide a comprehensive education about contemporary issues. For a listing of courses, visit

<https://www.vcu.edu/academics/>.

### VCU DEGREES AND COURSES RELATED TO SUBSTANCE MISUSE ISSUES

#### *Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies*

The Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies seeks to explore the complex problems of drugs through multidisciplinary research and training, with a focus on the neuroscience of addictions and related neurobehavioral disorders. For more information, visit

<https://idas.vcu.edu/about-us/>.

#### *Institute for Behavioral & Emotional Health (IRBEH)*

The Institute for Behavioral & Emotional Health (IRBEH) grew out of the Spit for Science study, a university-wide research project focused on substance use and emotional health outcomes in college populations. COBE's mission is to promote behavioral and emotional health among young people through the integration of research with coursework, programming, and policy. For more information on IRBEH's activities, visit

<https://irbeh.vcu.edu/>.

#### *The International Programme in Addiction Studies (IPAS)*

The International Programme in Addiction Studies (IPAS) is a unique collaboration of three of the world's leading research universities in the field of Addiction Science: King's College London, the University of Adelaide, and Virginia Commonwealth University. This partnership offers three nested graduate program options available to students from around the globe via distance learning technologies. Students are introduced to the latest information on topics ranging from the biological basis of addiction to addiction treatment, prevention and policy through lectures produced exclusively for IPAS by an international Who's Who of experts in the field. For more information on IPAS, visit

<https://ipas.vcu.edu/>.

#### *Virginia Institute of Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics*

The mission of Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics is to study the etiology of psychiatric, substance use, and major biomedical disorders that have a significant behavioral component. VIPBG aligns with the mission, policies, and core values of VCU and reaffirms the importance of integrity, diversity, inclusion, equity and excellence in teaching, research, and service. VIPBG's research foci include psychiatry, substance abuse, genetic epidemiology, molecular genetics/genomics, and the development of statistical methods and software to analyze complex data. We aim to understand the interplay of genetic, environmental and other factors in public health, to educate the next generation of researchers, and to share findings with the scientific community and the general public.



### *Substance Use Focused Courses*

RHAB 202. General Substance Abuse Studies. 3 Hours.  
 RHAB 321. Introduction to Substance Abuse. 3 Hours.  
 RHAB 452. Crisis Intervention with the Substance Abuser. 3 Hours.  
 PSYC 415. Psychological Theories of Addiction  
 PSYC 416. Psychological Treatment of Addiction  
 HPEX 352. Substance Abuse.  
 CLED 650. Addiction Counseling  
 CRJS 417. Drug Use, Drug Policy and Criminal Justice  
 FRSC 445. Forensic Toxicology and Drugs.  
 FRSC 645. Applications in Forensic Toxicology  
 IPAS 600. The Biological Basis of Addiction  
 IPAS 601. Treatment of Addiction: Psychosocial Interventions  
 IPAS 602. Public Health Issues and Approaches to Addictions  
 IPAS 603. Addiction Policy  
 IPAS 604. Treatment of Addiction: Pharmacotherapies  
 IPAS 605. Treatment of Addiction: Critical Issues  
 IPAS 606. Research Methodology in Addictions  
 IPAS 692. Research Project in Addictions  
 PHTX 548. Drug Dependence  
 BIO 452. Drug Biology

## **Measuring Student Behavior**

In March 2023, RecWell administered the American College Health Association National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA III) to a group of 5,000 randomly selected VCU students. Many of the items pertain to alcohol and other drug use by students. Data from this survey not only shape intervention plans, but are also used to create social norms and prevention programs. This data enables RecWell to compare VCU to national reference groups and look for changes in trends and anticipate potential unique issues among the VCU student population. Nationally, alcohol consumption among VCU students has remained lower than national rates.

During the 2022-2024 biennium, staff from RecWell finalized the effort on a National Institutes of Health R34 grant project exploring using genetically influenced externalizing and internalizing risk pathways as themes for universal prevention programs for incoming college students (Dick et al., 2021). Research findings from the subsequent clinical trial were analyzed and shared through several publications:

Choi M, Driver MN, Balcke E, Saunders T, Langberg JM, Dick DM. Initial Results from a New College Substance Use Prevention Program Targeting Externalizing and Internalizing Traits. *Substance use & misuse*. 2024;59(3):421-424. doi:10.1080/10826084.2023.2275565

Choi M, Driver MN, Balcke E, Saunders T, Langberg JM, Dick DM. Bridging the gap between genetic epidemiological research and prevention: A randomized control trial of a novel personalized feedback program for alcohol and cannabis use. *Drug and alcohol dependence*. 2023;249:110818-110818. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2023.110818

Dick DM, Saunders T, Balcke E, et al. Genetically Influenced Externalizing and Internalizing Risk Pathways as Novel Prevention Targets. *Psychology of addictive behaviors*. 2022;36(6):595-606. doi:10.1037/adb0000759

VCU leads and administers the CoRe Study, a National Longitudinal Study of Students in Collegiate Recovery Programs. The study is a partnership between IRBEH, the School of Social work and Rams in Recovery. The study includes more than 600 students nationwide, and has found both locally and nationally that students in CRPs thrive academically and socially despite having very high past problem severity. The results of the study have been presented at multiple National keynotes including the Association of Recovery in Higher Education and has had two papers published so far from this work.

## **Campus Police and Enforcement**

### **POLICY DISTRIBUTION**

The VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy was distributed as required once each academic year. For this biennium, the dates of distribution were 11/17/22, 10/31/23, 09/10/24. The primary distribution method was email. The email was distributed as part of the daily university newsletter, the TelegRam and this was followed and reinforced by posting on the DSA Updates blog. The notice instructs all students, faculty and staff that it is their responsibility to read the policy and to be familiar with its contents. It contains a link to the AOD policy. The policy is available [here](#).

Additional methods are employed to reach VCU's newest members. Each new faculty and/or staff employee received a copy during orientation through Human Resources. Copies were provided online to other new employees (i.e. hourly, adjunct faculty, graduate assistants). VCU expects administrators to distribute the policy within their departments. The email from the provost specifically instructs managers to print the policy for employees with limited or no access to email.

### **POLICY REVISION**

The VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy (Appendix A) was most recently updated in March of 2018 and reviewed again March of 2021. The policy, especially those concerning VCU and local resources and laws, are updated annually for accuracy prior to distribution. According to the Integrity and Compliance Office policy, the VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy is required to be updated every three years. [Alcohol and Other Drugs - Virginia Commonwealth University](#)

## **POLICY ENFORCEMENT/DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

### *Student Conduct and Academic Integrity*

The Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity administers the University's Student Code of Conduct, taking disciplinary action with respect to violations of VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy. Incidents that occur within University residence halls are adjudicated by Residential Life and Housing Staff

### *VCU Human Resources and the VCU Health System Human Resources*

VCU Human Resources and the VCU Health System Human Resources are responsible for disciplinary action of VCU employees and VCU Health System employees respectively. In 2020-2021, VCU had a total of 23,382 full-time and part-time employees, and in 2021-2022, VCU had a total of 24,208 full-time and part-time employees (as reported in the "VCU Fact Card," prepared by the VCU Institutional Research and Decision Support).

### *VCU Police Department*

The VCU Police Department (VCUPD) and their partners provided the following special projects and initiatives to combat the illegal use of alcohol and drugs on VCU's campuses and surrounding neighborhoods:

Checkpoints: To discourage and identify inebriated and impaired drivers VCU Police Department participated in two checkpoints: (1) The DMV DUI Selective Enforcement Team and Virginia State Police checkpoint, during the Academic Year 2022-2023 and (2) the Administrative Checkpoint during the fall of the Academic Year 2023-2024.

Walk Like MADD: In September of the Academic Year 2022-2023, VCUPD participated in the Richmond MADD Walkathon to raise mission-critical funds for Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). Walk Like MADD provides an outlet for those impacted by drunk and drugged and provides education on preventing future incidents due to impairment. The department's annual participation in the Walk Like MADD walkathon collectively raised \$895.00.

Alcohol Awareness Programs- Academic Year 2022-2023: Throughout the 2022 - 2023 Academic Year, VCU Police provided alcohol and drug-related safety tips to 8,885 people. The event type breakdown is as follows:

During August, June, and July of the Academic Year 2022 - 2023, VCUPD Crime Prevention participated in one (1) Graduate Student Orientation that utilized a Zoom, and in-person option. Nearly 1000 people participated and viewed the VCUPD safety video containing alcohol and drug safety information.

VCUPD participated in ten (10) Family/Parent Orientations. 2,825 parents and family guests attended and received alcohol and drug safety information for their prospective students.

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In the Academic Year 2022 -2023, the University held four (4) Transfer Student Orientations. There were 775 attendees. Alcohol and drug safety information was provided in the event modules.

During the same academic year, VCU Police staff participated in one (1) International Student Orientation during which 160 attendees received drug and alcohol safety information. Likewise, the officers oriented 80 new Brand Center students and 150 transitional medical school students on alcohol and drug safety in the AY2022-2023 term.

For the Academic Year 2022-2023, the VCU Police Department participated in nine (9) New Student Orientations and provided alcohol and drug safety information to 3,680 participants.

Alcohol Awareness Programs- Academic Year 2023-2024: In the 2023-2024 Academic Year, 1,609 people received alcohol and drug-related safety tips before the end of the Spring Semester. The AY2023-2024 event breakdown is as follows:

VCUPD Crime Prevention participated in one (1) in-person Graduate Student Orientation during which 300 people participated and viewed the VCUPD safety video containing alcohol and drug safety information.

From August 2023 through May 2024, VCU Police participated in six (6) Orientations with 673 guests attending. The events included virtual, international, and transfer student groups. Each group received alcohol and drug safety information. During the same time frame, two (2) family orientations were conducted with 240 students and guests receiving alcohol and drug safety information.

VCU Police Department's crime prevention team members are scheduled to close out the AY23-24 term by presenting to an additional 6,100 orientation attendees and their guests during the June and July months. Each scheduled presentation will include alcohol and drug safety information to include Medical Amnesty.

Social Media: Throughout the 2022-2023 Academic Year, 6,929 people received alcohol and drug safety tips via the VCU Police social media channels. Throughout the 2023-2024 Academic Year, 6,339 people received alcohol and drug safety tips via VCU Police social media channels.

In the academic years 2022- 2023, social media was used to promote VCUPD's participation in the Virginia Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take Back event with VCU's School of Pharmacy in 2022. In April of the academic year 2023- 2024, the VCU Police Department, along with other police departments, co-hosted the Virginia DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back event at the James Madison Building.

Other Alcohol and Drug Safety Events: In the Academic Year 2022 – 2023, the VCU Police Department partnered with Residence Life and Housing to host three (3) programs intended to educate and prevent Driving Under the Influence (DUI). A total of 210 residents participated and received alcohol and drug safety education. Again, in the Academic Year 2023-2024 VCU Police Department hosted three (3) events: A Night Out with VCUPD, Drunk Goggles, and Lost in Liquor at the residence halls. 296 residents participated and received alcohol and drug safety information.

Party House Complaints:

AY2023-2024 = 148 Complaints and 40 House Visits; 0 Evictions; 33 had multiple complaints. No Landlord letters were sent. One house had nine (9) complaints with five (5) occurring in one night.

AY2023-2024 = 122 Complaints and 26 house Visits; 0 evictions; 27 had multiple complaints. No landlord letters were sent. One house had 12 complaints within three months; with seven of them being in one night.

VCU’s zero-tolerance policy for underage drinking was discussed during orientations, presentations, and events focused on alcohol and drug safety.

Fraternity and Sorority Safety Presentation: These presentations concentrated on drug and alcohol use. They highlighted the legal ramifications of arrest and jail time, the economic impact in fines and fees, and the academic impact.

Academic Year 2022-2023: 3 Presentations with 76 attendees.

Academic Year 2023-2024: 3 Presentations with 48 attendees.

*Figure 1: Total VCUPD Alcohol and Drug Arrests*

Type of Arrest	Fiscal Year 7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023	Fiscal Year 7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024
Drug Arrest Total	11	9
Drug ‘Warning/Prosecution Declined/Exceptional Clearance’	32	5
Alcohol Arrest Total	41	11
Alcohol ‘Warning/Prosecution Declined/Exceptional Clearance’	26	8

*NOTE: Drug Arrest includes drug/narcotic violations and drug equipment violations. Alcohol Arrest includes City Code violations for open container and drinking in public and liquor law violations.*



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**Medical Amnesty:** During the academic year 2022-2023, the VCU Police Department developed mandatory training for all sworn personnel on Medical Amnesty law. The course incorporated scenario-based examples and included the input of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity. VCU's policy for drug and alcohol safety, and drug and alcohol laws and ordinances, are reviewed in the training. In the Academic Year 2022-2023, there were 25 police reports completed for Medical Amnesty.

In the Academic year 2023-2024, the VCU Police Department conducted refresher training for Medical Amnesty. The training focused on; (1) the application of Medical Amnesty law, (2) to whom Medical Amnesty applied, (3) drug and alcohol law awareness, (4) VCU policy for drug and alcohol safety, and (5) report writing for Medical Amnesty. There were 33 police reports completed for Medical Amnesty for the 2023-2024 academic Year.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In this biennium the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Committee (AODAC) has determined that VCU has been consistent in its approach to prevention education and enforcement. The AODAC finds the VCU Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy has been applied fairly and consistently to all members of the university.

### **PROGRESS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LAST BIENNIAL REVIEW**

- Disaggregate conduct data to identify any sanctioning or disciplinary patterns by race/ethnicity, gender, and other identity characteristics, which may indicate AOD policies are not being applied equitably.
  - This was completed and will be reviewed and discussed by the committee. A preliminary review of the data indicates that AOD policies are being applied in an equitable fashion.
- Provide more detailed information regarding the medical amnesty policy and its application.
  - A campaign to educate students on the medical amnesty policy has been ongoing during this biennium. Information about when and how to use the medical amnesty policy was included in AlcoholEdu, via posters updated monthly in bathroom stalls across VCU, and on social media.
- Conduct more regular AOD Advisory Committee meetings to focus on survey and trend data, evaluate current practices, and implement evidence-based practices.
  - During the 2023-2024 academic year, the full AOD committee met 3 times, and each of 4 subcommittees met at least twice each. The 4 focus areas of the committees were Naloxone access, substance use treatment capacity and education of Counseling and Health Services, comprehensive cannabis education, and required student programming.

- Administer the American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment (NCHA) spring semester 2022 and review the results with the committee
  - The American College Health Association National College Health Assessment III online survey was administered in Spring 2023 to 5000 randomly selected undergraduate and graduate students at VCU. The final sample size for the survey was 451, a 9% response rate. Findings from the survey have been shared with the University Alcohol and Other Drugs Committee and other key stakeholders from across VCU. Due to the decline in random sample survey response rates in recent years, a decision was made to switch to an every 3-4 year survey administration for the National College Health Assessment at VCU.
- Increase the number of students completing the AlcoholEdu module.
  - AlcoholEdu was required for incoming VCU students beginning in the 2021-2022 academic year. In 2021-2022, during year 1, 35% for incoming VCU students completed the course. Data for the most recent 2023-2024 academic year shows a slight increase in completion, with 41% of incoming VCU students completing the training (~2604 students). In 2023-2024, significant effort from this committee was dedicated toward taking action to ensure that this completion rate continues to increase in the coming years.
- Increase awareness of fentanyl overdose symptoms, effects, and treatment along with other emerging synthetic opioids.
  - Rams in Recovery has substantially expanded naloxone and opioid overdose awareness training during the biennium including training more than 2800 people to use naloxone and distributing the life saving medication to more than 1500. Rams in Recovery has worked with safety and risk management to install more than 70 Opioid Emergency Response Kits across campus during the 2024-2025 school year. Rams in Recovery has also provide Recovery ally training to more than 1600 individuals during the biennium which includes a section on the fentanyl crisis.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2024-2026 BIENNIUM**

- Create and launch a central website to function as a one-stop resource and collaborative mechanism for alcohol and other drugs prevention, education, research, and treatment/support.
- Implement a comprehensive cannabis educational campaign focused on harm reduction that addresses cannabis use issues specific to VCU students.
- Continue to decrease barriers for completion of AlcoholEdu, and explore more sustainable alternatives to AlcoholEdu that incorporate additional cannabis and opioid harm reduction education for incoming VCU students.
- Pilot and implement a large-scale, in-person alcohol and other drug program for incoming students
- Explore options for hosting required, large-scale in-person alcohol and other drug educational sessions for incoming students living in first-year residence halls during their first week on campus.



## Appendices

[VCU Alcohol and Other Drug Policy](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)





**VCU** Division of  
Student Affairs