

Students tipple more than national average...

University students are generally heavier drinkers than students around the nation, according to a comparison between a local survey and a national study.

Nationally, 82.1 percent of students drink — 86.4 percent of men and 79.4 percent of women — while about 92 percent of University students drink — 90.7 percent of men and 93.3 percent of women. Drinking is defined as at least one alcoholic beverage in the past year.

The national survey results were reported in the Jan. 19 edition of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as part of a study recently completed by Ruth Engs, an Indiana University associate professor and David Hanson, an associate professor at the State University of New York College at Potsdam.

Patty Gwartney-Gibbs, a University associate sociology professor, compiled a study of University students in

August 1982.

Gwartney-Gibbs says it's difficult to rely on figures taken from students over the past year, because students often don't remember accurately.

She says it's better to ask about drinking habits over the past month or week.

While statistics for drinking patterns over the last month and week are fairly consistent, there are "vast differences" in the accuracy of statistics between monthly and weekly alcohol intake and the data for a year.

For example, in the Gwartney-Gibbs study, when asked if they had drunk within the last month, 86.4 percent of men had had a drink and 84.4 percent of women had imbibed, somewhat lower than the yearly figures.

A comparison of the national survey's results with a similar report compiled in 1974 showed the proportion of students who drink alcoholic beverages — about 80 percent — has not changed over the past eight years



Emerald photo

A comparison shows University students are more-than-your-average tippers.

and the proportion of heavy drinkers has risen only slightly, says Engs and Hanson.

Gwartney-Gibbs says the national survey was unscientifically conducted because it does not take a random sample, and was distributed in sociology and health classes, which are not necessarily representative of students.

The results may be biased because students in sociology and health classes may tend to be more aware of alcohol-related problems she says.

"The survey had no business being published," she says. "It is not a random sample. So what if 5,000 students are surveyed. If it is not representative it does not mean anything."

Because the national study's "sample is garbage," comparing it to the study done here, which did use a representative sampling of students, may be worthless, Gwartney-Gibbs says.

The national survey noted an increase in the proportion of heavy drinkers, jumping from 11.6 percent in 1974 to 17.2 percent in 1982. Heavy drinkers are students who have six or

more drinks at one sitting more than once a week.

The University study used an average daily volume standard to measure heavy drinking. Heavy drinkers were those who drank more than 1.5 drinks per day, with about 27 percent of men and 11 percent of women judged to be heavy drinkers.

The number of women who are heavy drinkers rose from 4.4 percent in 1974 to 11.4 percent in 1982 nationally and is at 11 percent at the University.

Gwartney-Gibbs suggests the increase could be accounted for by an increase in the number of women willing to admit they are heavy drinkers because it is more socially acceptable.

According to the *Chronicle*, many college administrators are alarmed about the increased use of alcohol, but Engs suggests in her study that the change is an increased awareness of the problem by administrators rather than a change in student drinking habits.

Stories by
Sandy Johnstone

...though alcohol violations drop

While statistics show violations of the student code dealing with alcohol consumption and possession are decreasing, this may not mean students' drinking habits are changing, according to Vernon Barkhurst, associate dean of students.

In 1980-81, 26 violations were reported of Section 4 of the student code, which prohibits minors from consuming or possessing alcohol. In 1981-82, only 16 cases were reported, and so far in 1982-83 only six cases have been heard.

Barkhurst says the failure of residence hall personnel to report alcohol abuse incidents may account for the drop. Other violations of the student code such as vandalism, assault and disorderly conduct have increased, he says.

Barkhurst says a "substantial" number of violations of the student code are due to alcohol-related problems.

Nationwide, almost three-fourths of college administrators say alcohol is involved in at least 40 percent of the instances of residence hall damage, according to a recent survey.

The survey, was conducted by Angelo Gadaletto, director of counseling center at Radford University and David Anderson, alcohol-education coordinator at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The survey examines student drinking from perspectives of institutional policy, drinking behavior, education and prevention and counseling and treatment.

The survey also says the number of colleges with alcohol education programs has increased from 69 percent in 1979 to 79 percent in 1982.

The national survey also notes that 77 percent of the colleges do not allow alcohol to be advertised as the primary focus of a party. Some 74 percent require nonalcoholic drinks be available at public functions that serve alcohol, and about 46 percent require food to be served as well.

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