

To Pub or not to Pub? Potential Consequences of Having Alcohol Available in Corbett Center

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Introduction

A meeting was held amongst Matthew Bose, ASNMSU President, Debra Darmata, M.S., WAVE Operations Manager and Meg Long, MPH., WAVE Program Specialist on September 28th to discuss ASNMSU's Resolution #12 which will be put up for vote on October 20th. The Resolution states "the senate and the Associated Students of New Mexico State University believe that acquisition of a liquor license and creation of a Pub for Corbett Center Student Union would be a good addition to the student life at the Corbett Center Student Union, providing a location that students may indulge in adult beverages while remaining on campus". Mr. Bose reached out to the WAVE office seeking out information that may be helpful while considering the above endeavor; essentially not only seeking out our expert opinions, but reporting on any data, literature, etc., that would shed some light on all the potential implications and consequences of having a Pub at Corbett Center.

After reading Resolution #12 and the attached FAQ, it is our opinion that some aspects are well thought out such as preventing minors from entering the bar and adhering to a 2-3 drink limit. It is purposed that two forms of identification be used to enter the bar and one being the NMSU student ID which can be swiped and set up to allow students 21 and over entrance. This plan would likely eliminate underage drinking because although a fake license is plausible, getting past the Banner ID requirement would be difficult. It is also proposed students receive a hole punch bracelet upon entering and that a hole is punched for every drink therefore maintaining a three drink limit. This would not, however, prevent students that have already been drinking from entering the bar and obtaining three more drinks.

However, there are five areas of potential concern that were not addressed: 1) the potential impact on students who are in recovery; 2) the potential impact on students who don't like to be around alcohol / and or grew up in alcoholic homes; 3) the potential impact on students who are not in recovery but struggle with alcohol abuse; 4) the potential impact on the larger campus environment; and perhaps most importantly for the university 5) the potential impact on academic performance and retention.

Collegiate Recovery

The impact on NMSU students who are currently in recovery should be taken into account during this decision making process. While the number of NMSU students currently in recovery is unknown, it is estimated that in the United States one in six college students meet the clinical criteria for current abuse or dependence on alcohol. (1,2) For those who are working to overcome their dependence, environmental factors such as easy access to alcohol and living in a social culture that promotes alcohol could have an impact on their decision to continue or discontinue their education at NMSU or perhaps even worse encourage them to start drinking again. (3) Given NMSU's current concern about student retention and low graduation rates, the effects an alcohol serving establishment in the student union can have on these students need to be carefully considered. To help support students in recovery, and as a recommended and made a priority by the US Department of Education and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (4), 33 US colleges and universities have developed College Recovery Programs (CRP). These programs provide students in recovery the following key elements: 1) dedicated alcohol free housing where they can live together and receive 24/7 support; 2) dedicated services including 12 step meetings on campus, addiction counselors, 3) dedicated recreational programming that excludes alcohol; 4) a strong alcohol prevention program that encourages general wellness and discourages substance abuse; and, 5) an overall campus climate that does not actively promote the use of alcohol. CRP's are becoming increasingly more popular across the nation and many students in recovery actively seek out colleges and universities that have CRP's. Recently ASU has included CRP services.

The creation of a pub in Corbett Center Student Union would be in direct opposition to the Department of Education and the Office of National Drug Control Policy's priority to expand recovery support services in the academic setting (4). The following scenario and those like it are quite imaginable:

"A student age 21 who has been in recovery for 8 months just learned that his parents are divorcing and that he just flunked a biochemistry midterm."

How easy is would it be for that student who is walking through Corbett Center, see the bar and feel moved to have a drink? One could argue that he could also walk across the street and have a drink but even a 10 minute walk could slow him down long enough to change his mind. Having alcohol immediately available to a person in recovery can contribute to relapse which is why it is common practice to discourage persons early in recovery to avoid living in a home where alcohol is readily available or hang out with friends when alcohol is being served.

Potential Impact on Students who Do Not Like to Be Around Alcohol and / or Grew Up in Alcoholic Homes

What are the students telling us about whether or not they want a bar in Corbett Center? It seems as though the majority of students are unaware that Resolution 12 is being "Brought to the table". None of the WAVE Peer Educators were aware of this potential impactful change.

Since we have no information on student opinion regarding Resolution 12 we can extrapolate some information from the CORE Survey about NMSU student and alcohol. Each year WAVE administers the CORE survey which measures student alcohol and drug use and beliefs and attitudes about alcohol. The first question is:

Do students 21 and older want the availability of alcohol at a party?

NMSU CORE survey data 2013 - 2015

Percentage of 21 and Over Who Do Not Want Alcohol Available at Parties		
2013	2014	2015
28.2	28.7	28

Results from the past three CORE Surveys indicate that 28% students age 21 and over prefer that alcohol **not** be available at parties. A reasonable assumption is that they would also prefer that alcohol not be available at Corbett Center.

Another consideration is keeping a “safe social space” for students who grew up in homes where alcohol or drugs were abused.

When combining the CORE surveys from 2012-2015 (which is a good representation of our students who are presently on campus) and examining the questions regarding the percent of **parental alcohol /drug abuse** the results are as follows:

Core 2012 - 2015				
N= 2853				
MOTHER	FATHER	STEPMOTHER	STEPFATHER	TOTAL
7.7	20.3	0.04	3	31.04

The overall use of alcohol in New Mexico as a whole is also noteworthy. New Mexico’s alcohol related death rate is highest in the nation (13). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, from 2006-2010 the percent of deaths in New Mexico that were alcohol attributable for persons age 20-64 was 15 to17%. This places NM at 51.2 per 100,000 people, which is almost double that of the national average of 27.9 per 100,000. During that same time frame, the years of potential life lost attributable to alcohol NM 1570.0 years national average 831.9 years. Given the undeniable impact alcohol use has on our state, it begs the questions of how our students have been effected by alcohol before coming to NMSU.

Potential Impact on Students Who are Not in Recovery but Struggle with Alcohol Abuse

Another student concern to consider is the percentage of students 21 and over who have struggled with alcohol and other drugs, specifically two indicators on the CORE survey:

"Thought I Had A Problem" and "Tried to Quit But Failed".

"Thought I Had A Problem"			
2013	2014	2015	
13	14.6	15.7	

Approximately between 13 and 16% of students over the age of 21 believe that they have a problem with alcohol and other drugs (AOD). In addition, between 6% and 7% have tried to stop using AOD but could not.

"Tried to Stop but Failed"		
2013	2014	2015
7.3	6.4	6

Our students who are struggling with alcohol could likely be negatively impacted should a bar be as close as Corbett Center which is presently a place for students to socialize and study without the temptation of drinking.

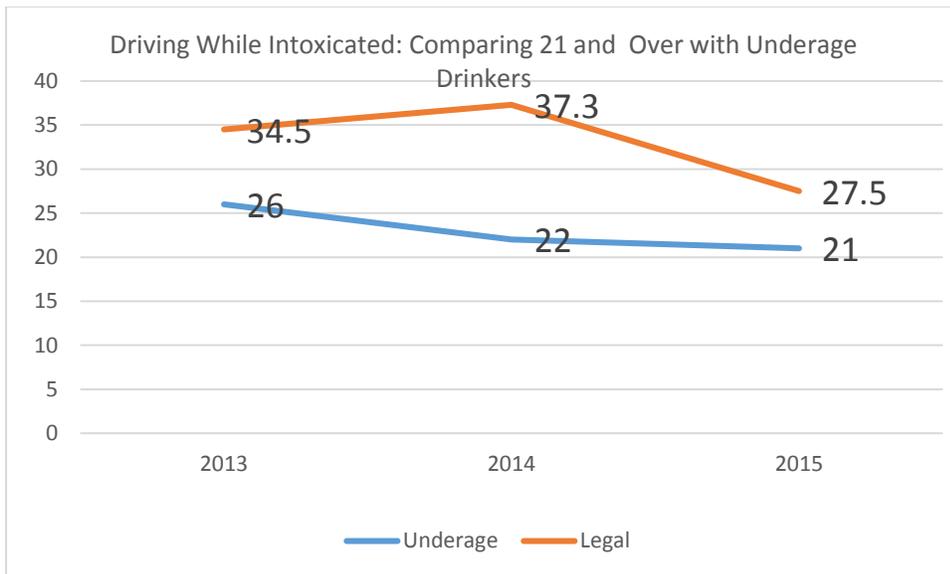
Potential Impact on the Larger Campus Environment / Consequences Associated with Increased Alcohol Density

There are consistent findings identifying correlations between alcohol outlet density (the number of places to buy alcohol) and more violent crimes (6), including homicide, rape and robbery (5), peer violence (10), violence crime rate, property crime rate, and homicide rate (11). It has also been found that higher rates of assault among customers occurs in establishments primarily devoted to drinking (7).

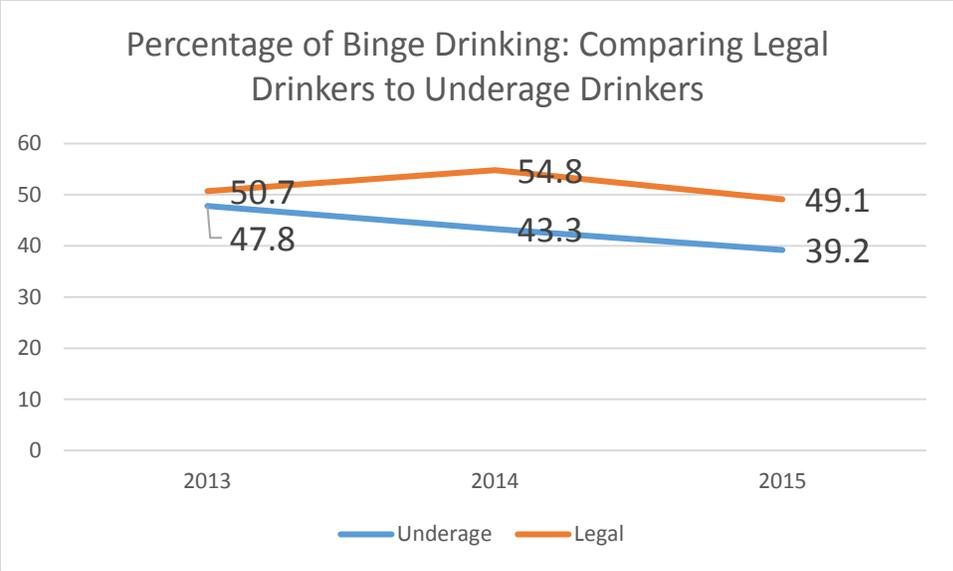
Looking at five different studies that assessed the association between outlet density and population-level alcohol consumption, it was learned that the increase of alcohol outlet density was indeed associated with increased consumption, and vice versa (8). Both drinking and driving and nonviolent related consequences also were more concentrated in areas with the greatest on premise and off-premise alcohol outlet density (9). When looking specifically at the effects of alcohol outlet density and college campuses, findings suggest the higher rates of violence are due to the higher drinking levels of those campuses due to the physical availability of alcohol (12). In terms of campus safety, having a pub in Corbett Center could actually increase violent incidents and make the campus less safe.

One of the arguments in the literature that favors on campus bars includes it would prevent students from drinking and driving. However this would not be true for NMSU specifically because 85% of NMSU students who are 20 and over live off campus. Having a bar at Corbett Center which is at the center of NMSU foot traffic could potentially increase the likelihood of a student on foot or bike getting hit by an impaired driver. The other two campus bars, i.e., Fulton and the NMSU Golf Course are both located on the outskirts of campus. Of special interest is the CORE question regarding “*Driven Under the Influence*” because having a pub on campus increases the likelihood that drivers will be impaired while driving on campus.

The following graph shows the percentage of NMSU students that drink and drive:



One of the tenants for having a bar on campus is the assurance that underage drinkers will not be served but the above graph demonstrates nicely that students 21 and over are not necessarily responsible drinkers. In fact, in this instance they are less responsible than those students who are 20 and younger. There is that hope/wish/assumption that turning 21 will suddenly dramatically reduce the incidence of high risk drinking and that somehow older students “know how to drink responsibly”. This is far from the truth and there is nothing magical that happens at 21 except that one can no longer be charged with a MIP. When looking at the most recent CORE surveys results show that Binge drinking is higher with legal drinkers than underage drinkers.



When looking at the 2014 CORE (which was used because the 2015 CORE had a small N with legal drinkers), the 21 and over group had a higher percentage of consequences on the following indicators: hangover, poor test score, damaged property, driven under the influence, missed class, thought they had a problem with AOD, and thought about suicide than the under 21 group. The following chart shows the differences in consequences for legal and underage drinkers.

Comparison of Legal and Underage	CORE 2014	
	LEGAL N=172	UNDERAGE N=625
HANGOVER	71* 	53
POOR TEST SCORE	28.6* 	22.5
TROUBLE WITH POLICE	7	8.4
DAMAGED PROP.	7* 	1.5
ARGUE/FIGHT	27	23
NAUSEOUS/VOMITED	50* 	47.3
DRIVEN UNDER INFLUENCE	37.3* 	22
MISSED CLASS	30* 	26.4
BEEN CRITICIZED	27	32.7
THOUGHT I HAD PROBLEM	14.6* 	9.6
MEMORY LOSS	28.4	26
REGRETTED ACTION	25.6	30
DWI	0.06	0.07
WAS SEXUALLY ASSULTED	6	6.6
SEXUALLY ASSULTED SOMEONE	1.3	1.2
TRIED BUT FAILED TO STOP	6.4	6.3
THOUGHT ABOUT SUICIDE	9* 	4.7
TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE	0.06	1.5
BEEN HURT OR INJURED	13	13

Potential Impact on Academic Performance and Retention

Nationally, one in four students report having problems in school due to drinking; among college students who dropout, an estimated 30% attribute it to alcohol abuse [13]. The 2014 and 2015 CORE surveys demonstrates the relationship between grades and the average number of drinks per week for NMSU legal drinkers:

LEGAL DRINKERS – CORE SURVEY	2014			
	A's	B's	C's	D's and F's
Grades				
Ave # of drinks per week	3.64	5.94	5.88	N=0
	2015			
Grades	A's	B's	C's	D's and F's
Ave # of drinks per week	4	5.33	7.2	N=0

Results show clearly that as average number of drinks go up grades go down.

CONCLUSION

This office can appreciate the intention of Resolution #12 and the spirit of the rationale, i.e. “allows our students to enjoy an adult beverage while studying in between classes or unwinding after a long day on campus.” Unfortunately, after reviewing the published literature and examining the results of our own CORE surveys, we strongly recommend that Resolution 12, as presently proposed not be passed. However, a portion of the resolution seems worth considering such as having a liquor license at Corbett Center to be used for 21 and over special events. Should the resolution pass in its present form, WAVE would like to continue to serve as a consultant, hoping to mitigate some of the potentially harmful effects.

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