

Sustainability Plan

Ohio's Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG)

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG): Sustainability Module

Introduction

“The key element of sustainability is providing continued benefits, regardless of particular activities delivered or the format in which they are delivered.” –Mancini & Marek (2002)

There are four clarifying questions that need to be answered in order for sustainability planning to move forward:

1. *What* are you trying to sustain? (or, *What* needs to be sustained?)
2. **Public Value:** What *evidence* do you have that what you are doing is *worth sustaining*? (or, Why does this initiative *deserve* to be sustained?)
3. **Authorizing Environment:** What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability?
4. **Operational Capacity:** What *capacity* is necessary to sustain this effort and *where* will that capacity come from?

A. Building the Sustainability Team

Before these questions can be answered, it is essential that you *identify the key players*. It is very important to consider your authorizing environment (Moore, 1995).

Who are the individuals on your campus that need to be involved in conversations about sustainability?

- Office of the Dean of Students
- Counseling Center
- Wellness Connection
- Vice President for Student Affairs Office
- Orientation and First Year Programs
- IT
- Wood County Prevention Coalition
- Drug, Alcohol and Sexual Offenses Coalition

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B. Sustainability Question #1: What are you *trying* to sustain? (or, What *needs* to be sustained?)

Weiss, Coffman, Bohan-Baker (2002) identified four categories related “initiative sustainability.” These categories are very broad and are very applicable to alcohol prevention initiatives. These categories may be helpful for your team as you plan for sustainability. If your team has already clearly articulated what you are trying to sustain, you may want to categorize your objectives. Please feel free to create your own category if you need to.

Please remember that you do NOT need a sustainability objective/goal for each category. We are providing these categories as conversation catalysts, not as requirements.

1. *Organizations and/or Projects*: securing additional funding for projects begun or supported under the initiative
2. *Ideas*: maintaining the initiative’s core principals, values, beliefs, and commitment
3. *Relationships*: maintaining connections among people and institutions
4. *Outcomes*: maintaining initiative results

Please choose the question that most appropriately applies to your project: What are you *trying* to sustain? (or, What *needs* to be sustained?) Please state your sustainability objectives/goals as bullet-point statements. Each objective/goal must be specific, measurable, and observable.

- See bulleted components in Policy Strategy Map (attached).

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C. Sustainability Question #2: Public Value - What *evidence* do you have that what you are doing is *worth sustaining*? (or, Why does this initiative *deserve* to be sustained?)

We discussed the idea of *public value* (Moore, 1995). It may be helpful to frame this conversation among your planning team as such. For example, it may be useful to have your planning team respond to these questions (You do not need to write responses to these questions, these are just provided as conversation catalysts.):

- How is this alcohol prevention initiative positively impacting students?
- What results from this alcohol prevention initiative are valued by the campus community? The local community surrounding campus?
- What results from this alcohol prevention initiative are valued by the leadership team?

Once you have answered these questions, please respond to the overarching question (whichever form is most applicable to your situation): What evidence do you have that what you are doing is worth sustaining? (or, Why does this initiative deserve to be sustained?)

The evidence that what we are doing is worth sustaining is that we have started to see the evidence that the online alcohol assessment is becoming part of the culture. Students have now started to “expect” to take the assessment and Orientation Leaders have now incorporated the explanation of the assessment into their “talk” to incoming students. Orientation and First Year Programs have incorporated the explanation into their marketing materials so there is evidence that it is becoming a part of the educational process. It is too early to tell if any differences have been made with only two years of data, however, with a 5 year contract ahead with Campus Clarity and a more comprehensive topic-base, we are confident we will see some change over time.

According to the data we do have with AlcoholEdu, we have not seen any significant detrimental changes over time which is very promising. We have also seen a dramatic increase in incoming students taking the initial survey from year one to year two. We have also seen more parents engaged from year one to year two, letting us know that not only students value this prevention initiative, but also their parents.

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D. Sustainability Question #3: Authorizing Environment - What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability?

We discussed the idea of *authorizing environment* (Moore, 1995). It is important to determine who holds the ability to make key decisions regarding the sustainability of the project.

What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability of your alcohol prevention initiative? It may be helpful to frame your answer to this question using the following sub-questions:

- What current *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* support your alcohol prevention initiative?
- Of these structures, which could be strengthened to ensure sustainability of your alcohol prevention initiative?
- What structures are blocking or obstructing your alcohol prevention initiative?
- Which structures are still needed to ensure sustaining your alcohol prevention initiative?

Currently, the Student Handbook, which includes the Student Code of Conduct, outlines the student alcohol policy. The Office of the Dean of Students oversees this process. The policy is one of an educational philosophy. The AlcoholEdu initiative is one of an implied mandate so all incoming students are encouraged to take it. Currently, about 2/3 of students take part. Students who are sanctioned also participate in the Sanctions component of the product. There is a 3 strike policy to the sanction process. The Office of the Dean of Students and Counseling Center work hand in hand. There is no alcohol prevention education done during the orientation process. Alcohol Prevention is done through the Wellness Connection programming including the peer educators, presentations, late night events, and various other outreach efforts.

There are several aspects to these structures that could be strengthened. Making AlcoholEdu mandatory instead of an implied mandate would be helpful. Also, incorporating alcohol prevention education into the orientation process would be quite beneficial. The barrier to this has been politics and a philosophical belief system that has been around for a while. Until those individuals in power with these beliefs move on or change, it remains a difficult situation. We are excited for a new online alcohol assessment that will be all encompassing. It will not only include alcohol but will also include drugs, relationships, and sexual assault issues. We are awaiting this software.

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E. Sustainability Question #4: Operational Capacity - What *capacity* is necessary to sustain this effort and *where* will that capacity come from?

We discussed the idea of *operational capacity*. In order for your sustainability goals/objectives to become reality, your alcohol prevention initiative must have the *capacity* necessary to achieve those outcomes. Capacity is defined in many ways, including (but not limited to): securing diverse resources and acquiring the appropriate expertise. Basically, the purpose of this question is to determine the resources (e.g., time, personnel, funding, etc.) needed to achieve each sustainability goal/objective.

What operational capacity is necessary to achieve sustainability and where will the capacity come from to sustain your alcohol prevention initiative? It may be helpful to frame your answer to this question using the following sub-questions:

- What current resources are necessary to sustain your alcohol prevention initiative?
 - Of these resources, which is insufficient or vulnerable?
 - What current skills and expertise does your initiative rely on to sustain your initiative's positive outcomes?
 - Of these skills and expertise, which could be strengthened to ensure sustained positive outcomes?
 - Which skills and expertise are still needed to sustain positive outcomes?
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- Resources Needed: Personnel from Office of Dean of Students, Wellness Connection, IT, and Counseling Center; funding from Counseling Center; time; software integration with BGSU system; data (Campus Clarity, NCHA)
 - Vulnerable Resources: Funding is always vulnerable, however, we have a 5 year contract and have ensured money to pay the contract with money from alcohol sanctions; the VPSA has given us full support of the program.
 - Skills and Expertise: IT for software integration, Office of Dean of Students and Counseling for sanctioning issues; Wellness Connection for data analysis
 - Data analysis skills could be strengthened to ensure positive outcomes and appropriate interpretation of the data
 - I cannot think of any skills and expertise that are still needed to sustain a positive outcome.

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F. Strengths/Challenges

In any projects, there are strengths and challenges. The purpose of the following questions is to help you identify ways you can capitalize on your strengths and prepare for probable or potential obstacles.

1. In what ways do you believe your alcohol prevention initiative is positioned to achieve sustainability?
2. What are the probable or potential obstacles to sustainability?

We have a 5 year contract with Campus Clarity so we are well-positioned for sustainability. We will have 5 years' worth of data. We have undergone the SPF-SIG process for 3 years now and have a great team in place. We have put together a solid plan and worked strategically with data-driven goals/objectives in mind. We have had wonderful support from the state, our evaluators, and the community so we have a strong foundation and excellent network of resources. We have taken the time to research what assessment tool would be most appropriate for our campus. We have talked with several other campuses across the country and weighed the pros and cons. We have done our due diligence no doubt. I am extremely confident that we are in a position to achieve sustainability given the process that we have undergone.

The obstacles that may hinder us would be political, budgetary, and philosophical in nature. I have mentioned these previously in the report. These are challenges we continue to battle, however, with data, communication and collaboration we will keep working towards our goals and objectives. Some may be more long-term than others, but they still remain our goals/objectives.

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