

Sustainability Plan

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

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

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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?

The following offices have been a part of our sustainability efforts:

- University Judicial Affairs
- UC Women’s Center
- Student Wellness Center
- Human Resources
- Enrollment Management
- UCIT

This group has worked together over the past year to determine sustainability under the direction of our VP for Student Affairs, Debra Merchant.

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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.

We are working to sustain:

- Implementation of an online prevention program for all first year students attending the University of Cincinnati that address alcohol and sexual assault
- Continue to secure funding for an online alcohol and sexual assault prevention program

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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?)

This program has positively affected our campus in the following ways:

- Students reported that AlcoholEdu.....
 - Helped me establish a plan for responsible decisions around alcohol (71%)
 - Prepared me to identify and/or help someone who has alcohol poisoning (73%)
 - Stimulated me to reflect on my personal attitudes and behaviors (51%)
 - Changed my perceptions of others' drinking-related behaviors (49%)
- Among high risk drinkers who saw "no need to change the way they drink" before taking AlcoholEdu, 31% indicated readiness to change after completing Part 2 of AlcoholEdu.

The data collected from AlcoholEdu has been very helpful as we try to educate our campus administration and staff about the alcohol issues we have on our campus. We were able to share information about high-risk drinking, reasons students drink, pre-gaming, and where students are using alcohol. This information has been very beneficial to our Student Affairs administration as we work to gain additional resources to address ATOD issues on our campus.

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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?

A structure is currently being put into place to make sure our campus achieves sustainability. The following things are being put into place:

- Student Affairs will be hiring a fulltime Title IX deputy in the next few months. One of their many roles is to implement the alcohol and sexual assault prevention programming for incoming students.
- The Student Wellness Center is seeking funding for a fulltime ATOD prevention specialist on campus. There is currently no one person on campus addressing these issues. The VP for Student Affairs is in support of this and is in the process of seeking funding. This persons work will compliment and build on what first year students will learn from the online prevention program. This person will also handle alcohol education sanctions as well as policy and advocacy.

There are a few obstacles we need to tackle in order to address alcohol comprehensively on our campus. First, we need to revise our policies and proceeds when it comes to alcohol sanctions and issues on our campus. We also need to build a stronger communication channel among our off-campus partners. Since our campus is in the middle of a city, we have additional community issues to work out; including getting more information about alcohol related off campus issues and town gown relations. We have a group of individuals on our campus that are currently looking to address some of these issues. Continued support of our administration is going to be very important as we move forward.

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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?

Funding is a necessary resource that has already been approved by the financial officer on our campus and supported by our President. We are guaranteed funding for at least the next 3 years. There is also a person that is being hired to help with implementation of the initiatives. Our new VP for Student Affairs, Debra Merchant, is 100% behind the sustainability of online education for our first year students, which is a major step in successful implementation and sustainability for our campus. We have several campus departments on board with this, which will help us market implementation to our first year students, including orientation and advisors. We will need to do some more education around the new program, since we are not using AlcoholEdu next year.

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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?

- I believe we will be able to sustain our alcohol prevention initiative because of the collaborative work we are doing across campus. We are able to offer our students a prevention tool that addresses not only alcohol, but the Campus Save mandate as well. This is hot topic on our campus right now and has a lot of administrative buy in.
- At this time, I do not see many potential obstacles. One obstacle I see is that the new program we will be using will most likely be implemented by our Title IX deputy in the Student Affairs department; we are currently looking to hire someone in this position. I hope the alcohol prevention piece doesn't get lost long term and that the sole focus becomes sexual assault.

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