



SSENSE Social Norming Press Conference and Kick Off event

UTSA has unveiled its poster media campaign on Friday, October 17, 2008 during a press conference and kick off at the UC Paseo. The SSENSE campaign (stands for Student Social Sense) aims to address the statistics on risky behaviors of UTSA students with the goal of addressing misperceptions that exist about alcohol consumption by UTSA students using banners and posters displayed around and outside of campus.

This is one of many projects UTSA has developed, conducted or participated in to proactively reduce high-risk alcohol consumption and high-risk behaviors associated with alcohol consumption to include issues such as underage drinking, binge drinking and sexual activity.

Howaida Werfelli, Health Education Coordinator of Student Health Services, chairperson of the SSENSE Social Norming committee and University Liaison for the MEI-PCC grant that funded the campaign activities, spoke about the planning and the essential meaning of SSENCE. "SSENSE is unique because of the multiple representations that it possesses. It represents an effort by students in a sense of understanding and awareness about alcohol and alcohol-related issues and consequences. It also represents a scholastic effort of faculty, staff, administration and the community at large to facilitate that sense of understanding and awareness to our students."

Kelsey Bratcher, Assistant Director of Student Activities under the Risk Education, Alcohol and Drug Program addressed the ongoing prevention programs UTSA has implemented on campus. Campus Crawl, for example, is an alcohol awareness program featured as a model program in BACCHUS Network's annual programming and has won an award on Outstanding Program as well as positive reviews. "Ultimately, campuses need to educate students about excessive drinking and consequences that can occur on both a personal and academic level. All college and university offices need to empower students to take responsibility for their own decisions and the campus environment when it comes to alcohol," Bratcher said. "We have to engage and empower students to take care of themselves and each other."

Christina Guerra, former Lieutenant of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, spoke that alcohol prevention efforts is a community effort and "students are part of the bigger community."

Unveiled were the poster designs of the campaign that will be publicly displayed around and outside of campus (see photo) in the next several months with a rotation. The Kick Off consisted of exhibit tables from Counseling Services, SHADES and Student Health Services, Planned Parenthood, and Student Activities BARR and a cake reception for the students.

The committee members that have made the program possible: Howaida M. Werfelli and Barbara Reyes (Student Health Services), Kelsey Bratcher and Barry McKinney (Student Activities), Elizabeth Stanczak (Counseling Services), Eliot Howard (Campus Recreation), Anne Jimenez, Jan McKinney, and Todd Wollenzier (Student Judicial Affairs); Jennifer Fuelein and Curtis Odle (Housing and Residence Life/Campus Living Villages), Re'Shanda Bridges (Orientation and Family Programs), Geoffrey Merritt (UTSA Police Department), Christopher Leeth (student), Karina Gil (Planned Parenthood), Vickie Adams and Briggs Reschki (San Antonio Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse).

Special thanks and appreciation to Student Health Services SHADES peer educators and student staff for assisting and making the event possible.