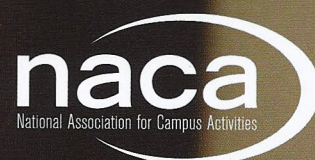


CAMPUS ACTIVITIES Programming™

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**Welcome
to Campus!
We're Glad
You're Here**



**Make Homecoming
Bigger and Better!**

**Importance of
Traditions and
School Spirit**

**Promoting Physical
Activity through Events**

**SPECIAL SECTION:
Regional Conference Preview**



The University of Texas at San Antonio came up with its own outdoor festival, Party on the Paseo, to help lure students away from the alcohol-related problems that had occurred in the past in conjunction with a city-sponsored event.

Student Activities: *More than Fun and Games*

By Kelsey Bratcher, MA, The University of Texas at San Antonio

Student activities departments and campus activities boards across the nation are known for hosting the hippest concerts, enticing their audiences into rolling on the floor in laughter with comedians and providing the most creative novelties. Deep down, though, student activities professionals know we are doing more than just providing the fun. The question is: do *our* assessments of our programs reflect more than just fun?

Serving as the Risk Education, Alcohol and Drug Programs professional housed in the Office of Student Activities at The University of Texas at San Antonio has had its challenges for me. It is through these challenges that I gained a different perspective of prevention education and how to utilize our campus activities events in more collaborative and purposeful ways.

Celebration Reconsidered

San Antonio is a city known for celebrating culture. The largest and most well known annual festival is Fiesta, which features 100 events during 11 days in celebration of San Antonio history and culture. From parades to concerts, pageants and fairs, there is something for everyone. You will find a plethora of food from around the world and, of course, alcohol.

One event during Fiesta is Night in Old San Antonio (NIOA). Located in San Antonio's first neighborhood, this multiple-evening event became very popular with college students, especially on Thursday. At UTSA, police officers were reporting a number of alcohol violations on that particular night and throughout the rest of the weekend.

In fall 2008, during the UTSA Student Activities spring calendar planning, a roadblock appeared when a musician was booked on campus on that infamous college night at NIOA. Event planners were unsure of student participation with a small concert on campus and wondered if it would be worth the financial commitment. With creative student activities hats on, and a great committee of campus partners, we successfully developed Party on the Paseo.

We turned the solo musician event into an on-campus, alcohol-free, outdoor festival with the same feeling and concept as the citywide Fiesta events. We featured food booths, department and student organization booths, community agency educational activities, giveaways, novelties and entertainment right in the middle of campus. In the first year, more than 2,000 participants enjoyed the festivities for free.

This past spring, we again had approximately 2,000 participants (including students, alumni, families, faculty and staff) and more departments, organizations and community agencies participating. A majority of the participants agree that they felt like they were part of the community and experienced Fiesta by attending our event.

Collaborating for Safety

The story could end here with 2,000 people having a good time on campus. However, Student Activities at UTSA, in offering such an event, is doing much more than providing an evening of entertainment for students. For some students, campus events can be life changing.

Reducing underage and high-risk drinking among college students can be a difficult message to send across campus. Collaborating with community organizations that provide education, resources and counseling for alcohol and drug use adds a successful educational component to our campus festival.

The UTSA Police Department researched the number of alcohol violations within the 48 hours after Party on the Paseo. The year prior to this event, there were 14 alcohol violations. The first Party on the Paseo resulted in decreasing the alcohol violations by half. This year, there was only one.



Student organization booths and community agency educational activities were part of Party on the Paseo and helped the event be more than just an opportunity for outdoor fun.

So now I issue this challenge to you: Utilize your campus and community alcohol and other drug professionals in your programming. Collaborate with student judicial affairs and the campus police department to track campus alcohol violations surrounding your events, especially traditional events. In the end, you could be surprised by what you learn through your program assessment. It could be that student activities events on your campus have a more significant impact on the lives of students than you think, perhaps even saving lives in certain circumstances. Student Activities does, indeed, do more than provide the *fun* on campus. We are changing lives one event at a time.

About the Author

Kelsey N. Bratcher, MA, is the first assistant director of Student Activities for Risk Education Alcohol and Drug Programs in Student Activities at **The University of Texas at San Antonio**.

She enjoys educating students about responsible choices they can make through Alcohol Awareness Week, Safe Spring Break events, classroom programs and other special events. She also advises the award-winning student group Be A Responsible Roadrunner (BARR), serves as the Texas State Coordinator for The BACCHUS Network and is also the Texas State/Territory Coordinator for The Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues. In February 2010, she received the first-of-its-kind Certificate in Alcohol Prevention Leadership. With more than 10 years of experience in student affairs, she's been involved with peer education, alcohol and drug programming, Greek life, student organizations, university event planning, diversity programming, leadership development, student activities councils, orientation, and university center management. Previously, Kelsey worked for Girl Scouts-Five Star Council, taught business and professional speaking at Amarillo College (TX), and was assistant director of the Jack B. Kelley Student Center at West Texas A&M University. She holds both a bachelor's degree in mass communications/broadcasting and a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies from West Texas A&M University.

