



**Student Life Committee: Abstainers & Light Drinkers Study**

## Improving the Social Lives of Abstainers & Light Drinkers

**Goals:** The Student Life Committee (SLC) of Student Assembly and the Student Life Department are currently working on improving the social lives of students who abstain from drinking alcohol or students who drink lightly. In order to determine how many students fall into those categories and to know what these students are like, the SLC analyzed data from the Dartmouth Health Survey 2008; in order to learn more about the realities of their social lives at Dartmouth, the SLC organized a focus group; and in order to determine how many late-night social outlets they have on campus, the SLC analyzed the monetary allocations of several student organizations.

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### Special Thanks

Student Assembly's Student Life Committee Chairs	Miesha Smith '09 & Ruslan Tovbulatov '09
Assistant Dean of the Student Life Department	Linda Kennedy
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Focus Group Moderators & Facilitators	Rodrigo Ramirez '07 Ayla Glass '09 Kaitlyn Sheehan '09 Miesha Smith '09 Ruslan Tovbulatov '09 Jen Argote '10 Cory Cunningham '10 Gaelle Tribie '10 Brandon Aiono '11 Ariana Almas '11 Karen Doster '11 Addie Gorlin '11 Greg Knight '12

Our sincerest thanks to all of the students who volunteered to participate in the abstainers & light drinkers focus group.

## Dartmouth Health Survey 2008

### Description:

The Dartmouth Health Survey is a survey consisting of a series of demographic and health related questions. One of the many questions of the survey asked students to select the category of drinker in which they fell. Students were able to self-identify what type of drinker they considered themselves to be, choosing from the following categories: abstainers, light drinker, moderate drinker, heavy drinker. The following is a summary and analysis of the data collected.

### Fast Facts about the Dartmouth Health Survey

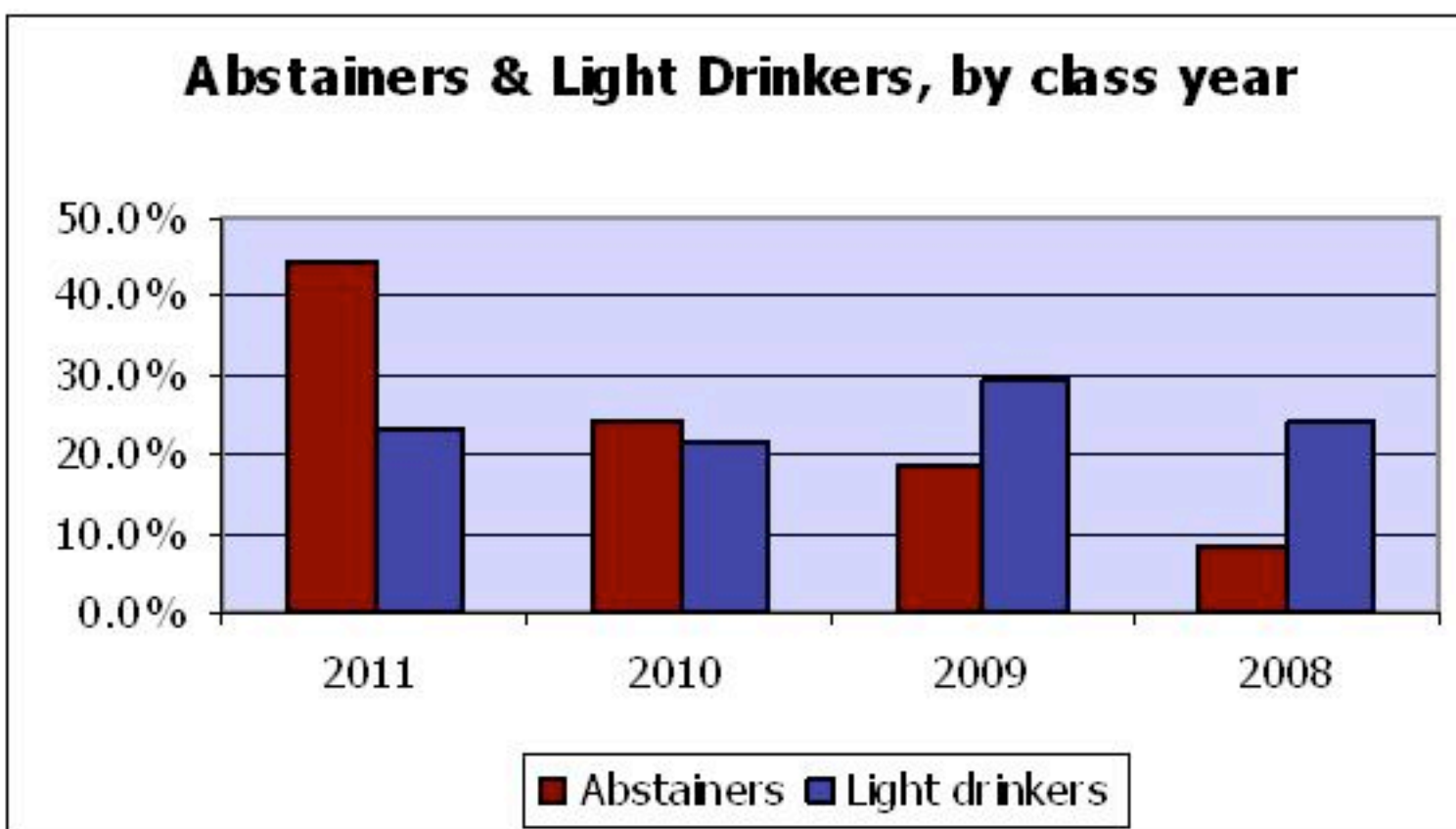
- N = 2172
- n = 682
- 31.4% response rate
- \*2 respondents were discarded because of skewed results

Describe yourself as a drinker	%
<b>Abstainers</b>	<b>18.2%</b>
<b>Light drinkers</b>	<b>40.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b> [abstainers + light drinkers]	<b>58.7%</b>

**58.7% of campus population = more than 2500 students**

**“It's really easy to fall for the stereotype that 95% of people at Dartmouth are blacked out every night. However, there are a lot of abstainers. You just have to make a concerted effort to find them.”—2011**

### Results:



### A CLOSER LOOK . . .

#### Identified as abstainers or light drinkers

- 67.5% of '11s (freshmen, at the time)
- 45.9% of '10s (sophomores, at the time)
- 48.1% of '09s (juniors, at the time)
- 32.8% of '08s (seniors, at the time)

### Conclusions

'11s (freshmen, at time of survey) had the largest amount of abstainers, and '08s (seniors, at time of survey) had the least amount. Overall, a large percentage of students from each class self-identify as abstainers or light drinkers.

Type of drinker	Gender		Housing				Fraternity	Athletics	
	Male	Female	Res Hall	Frat	Off-campus	Affinity	Member	Varsity	Club
<b>Abstainers</b>	<b>43.3%</b>	<b>56.7%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Light drinkers</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>70.6%</b>							

### Conclusions

Abstainers and light drinkers are not limited to certain communities. They are male and female; living on-campus, off-campus, in frats, and in affinity housing; members of fraternities and sororities; and involved in athletics. They are spread throughout campus, and can be found within many different communities.

## Focus Group

### Description:

The focus group participants were self-selected, having responded to either the "Activities for Students" or "Free Food" bulletins or a campus-wide blitz, which publicized the session as a focus group for light drinkers or abstainers. The participants were split up into groups based on their class year. There were six groups, summing to 35 participants in total. Two student facilitators, coordinated by Student Assembly, were assigned to each group. One of the facilitators read scripted questions and moderated the group's discussion while the other recorded the participants' comments. The facilitators were given clear instructions on how to moderate the open discussion.

### Fast Facts about the Focus Group

◦ Date: Thursday, October 30th, 2008

◦ Time: 6-7:30pm    ◦ Location: Collis

6 groups:	total = 35
- 3 groups of freshmen	n = 19
- 1 group of sophomores	n = 8
- 1 group of juniors	n = 5
- 1 group of seniors	n = 3

### Survey:

All of the focus group participants completed a short survey about the reasons they choose not to drink. There were 18 reasons listed, of which the participants could choose as many as they liked. Below are the top 4 reasons that the participants chose.

*"Why do you choose not to drink?"*

Reasons	# of times selected	Percentage	Rank
I want to be healthy	26	16%	1
From what I've seen, it holds no attraction	24	15%	2
Takes up time I can use better for other things	19	12%	3
Don't like the taste or the feeling	17	11%	4

\*all other reasons received less than 10% selection

### Student Quotes

"I'll be completely honest and say there's nothing to do here. We're in the middle of nowhere and there's not much to do outside of campus. So it's basically dominated by the fraternities, which are centered around drinking. That isn't really fun for me." – 2012

"I'm in kind of an interesting place right now because last year I abstained entirely, and now I drink lightly. Last year, I felt like I had limited options, but now I feel like I have more options." – 2011

"People don't use the day— they use the night. I'm usually pretty beat at the end of the week. There's nothing wrong with hanging out and just relaxing. If there were somewhere you can go to hang out, I'm certain there'd be a lot of people interested in going there." – 2011

"I feel limited. Even though I don't drink, I still end up on frat row because there aren't many other social options." – 2010

"After sophomore summer, I realized there are a lot of abstainers on campus— there just isn't any way to meet them. I wish there was a way I could reach out to people like me." – 2009

"If somebody didn't want to drink but wanted a huge social life, I'm not sure this would be the place for them." – 2012

### Conclusions

Abstainers and light drinkers choose not to drink or to drink lightly for many reasons—the top reasons concerning the utility of drinking in their eyes. Though their reasons are not socially influenced, the consequences of their choices are. Many abstainers and light drinkers feel unsupported, pressured by peers, lonely, and socially unsatisfied.

## Organization— Money Data

### Description:

Each year, the Undergraduate Finance Committee (UFC) distributes funds to the numerous student organizations on campus. Several of these student organizations use this funding to plan social events for Dartmouth's student body. It is the organizations' choice as to how they will implement the funds they receive. The Social Event Management Procedures (SEMP) manages and enforces guidelines for student social gatherings involving alcohol. SEMP is responsible for keeping records of the amount of alcohol allowed for registered social events.

Below is (1) a summary of how the funds allocated by UFC in the 2007-2008 school year were spent, in regards to events before and after midnight, with and without alcohol, and (2) a record of spending for events registered to SEMP.

### Fast Facts about the Organizations

#### Organizations' Name Abbreviations:

COSO:	Council On Student Organizations
PB:	Programming Board
'08 CC:	2008 Class Council
'09 CC:	2009 Class Council
'10 CC:	2010 Class Council
'11 CC:	2011 Class Council
SA:	Student Assembly
SPEC:	Special Programs & Events Committee
CGB:	Collis Governing Board
GLC:	Greek Leadership Council
SEMP:	Social Event Management Procedures

Student Organization	Before midnight, without alcohol	Before midnight, with alcohol	After midnight, without alcohol	After midnight, with alcohol
COSO	\$205,000			
PB	\$131,783	\$11,467	\$7500	\$0
'08 CC	\$2000	\$4000	\$750	\$3000
'09 CC	\$2500	\$1800	\$0	\$0
'10 CC	\$14,000		\$0	
'11 CC	\$7801	\$0	\$0	\$0
SA	\$2300	\$0	\$200	\$800
SPEC	\$90,624	\$18,490	\$3300	\$30,000
CGB	\$35,000			
GLC	\$36,000			

SEMP Events	Before/After Midnight	Alcohol	Pizza	DJ
Closed events	Before	\$4,723		
Open events	Before	\$6,701		
Closed events	After	\$30,763		
Open events	After	\$39,876	\$18,000	\$13,800

### Fast Facts about SEMP

- Closed— More than 40 members of an organization and invited guests not to exceed 80 people
- Open— All open events AND events with attendance at or exceeding 80 people.

### Conclusions

<b>AFTER midnight, WITH alcohol</b>	<b>\$104,439</b>
<b>ATFER midnight, WITHOUT alcohol</b>	<b>\$11,750</b>

