

## ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND PERCEPTION BY CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

The Carnegie Classification system is used in research and analysis of institutions of higher education. Partners in Prevention (PIP) has used the classification system to divide member campuses into recognizable groups for comparison, using the Base Classification from the Carnegie Foundation. The table below shows differences in the alcohol consumption and perceptions of students at various institutions.

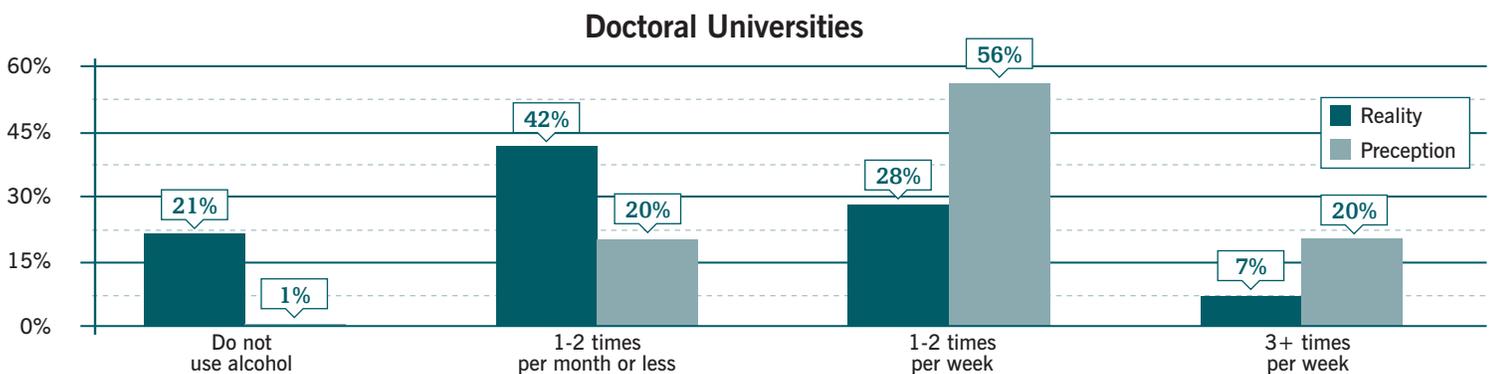
	Past year alcohol use	Past month alcohol use	Past two-weeks alcohol use	Binge drank 5+ drinks in a two-hour period
Baccalaureate Colleges <i>n=1048</i>	60%	45%	37%	16%
Master's Colleges & Universities <i>n=3996</i>	78%	63%	55%	27%
Doctoral Universities <i>n=4369</i>	81%	69%	61%	27%

*Data taken from the 2013 Missouri College Health Behavior Survey*

### DISCUSSION

As indicated in the table above, fewer students at Baccalaureate Colleges report drinking alcohol in the past year (60%) compared to those at institutions classified as Masters or Doctoral (78% and 81%, respectively). Baccalaureate Colleges also have lower rates of students reporting drinking in the past month and past-two weeks. As there are fewer students who drink, there are also fewer students who drink at a risky level. Only 16% of students at Baccalaureate Colleges reported consuming five or more drinks in a two hour period (NIAAA's definition of binge drinking), as compared to 27% of students at both Masters and Doctoral institutions.

Despite these differences in consumption across institutions, each institution has high levels of misperceptions, as evidenced by the graphs below. Misperceptions occur when the actual reported levels of consumption vary from the perceived levels of consumption. The graphs illustrate that each classification experiences high misperceptions. Interestingly, the perceived frequency of drinking that the "typical student" engages in is about the same in each category, while the actual amount of student drinking within each category varies dependent on the classification. It appears that students perceive the "typical student" on their campus to drink with the same relative frequency of students at other campuses. This may suggest that when students misperceive the student drinking, it is not misperceived on a campus-specific level.

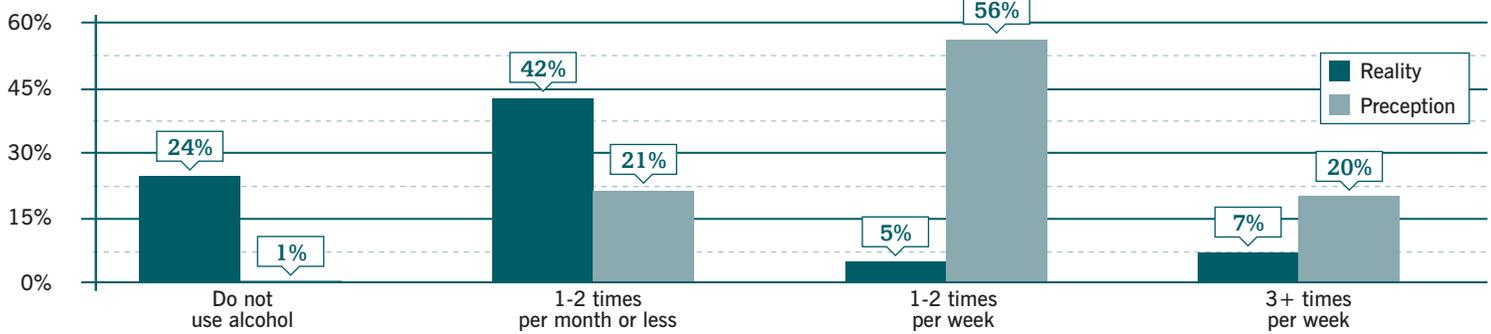


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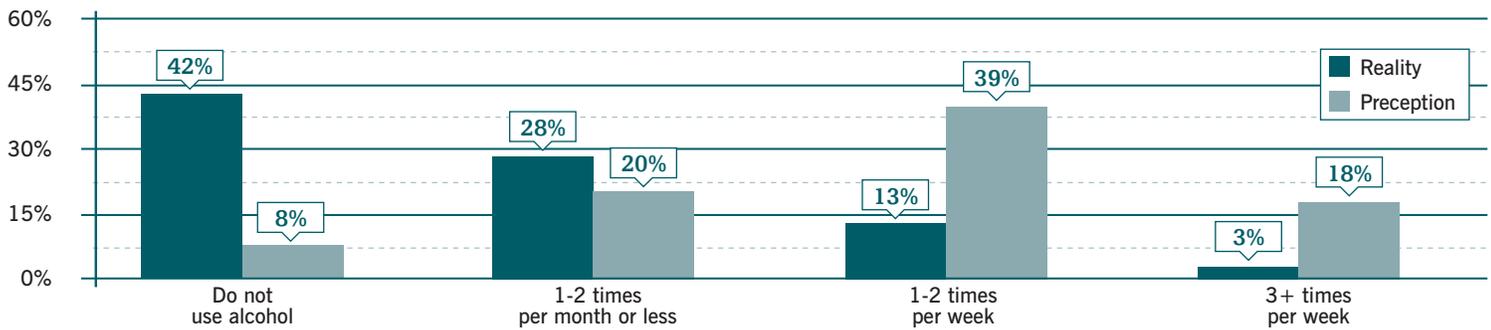
Compared to Masters and Doctoral institutions, students at Baccalaureate Colleges abstain from alcohol at higher levels. According to data from the 2013 Missouri College Health Behavior Survey, not only do higher amounts of students abstain at Baccalaureate Colleges (42% compared to 21% at Doctoral Universities), a very small percentage of students at Baccalaureate

Colleges use alcohol 3 or more times per week (3% compared to 7% at Masters and Doctoral Universities). While a higher percentage of students at Baccalaureate Colleges perceive healthier drinking behavior among their fellow students, their perception of drinking behavior is still strikingly different than the actual behavior that is occurring.

**Masters Institutions**



**Baccalaureate Colleges**



**SUMMARY**

In order to illustrate the trends in drinking behavior among college students at educational institutions throughout the State of Missouri, it is important to note both the differences and similarities among students at these schools. Frequent drinking behavior is more common at Doctoral Universities and Masters Institutions than at Baccalaureate Colleges.

While campuses in the Baccalaureate College category appear to have different base frequencies of drinking than the Master’s and Doctoral classifications, evidence of misperceptions regarding alcohol exist on all campuses. Misperceptions can be reduced with the implementation of an evidenced-based social norm campaign.

Social norms theory asserts that college students often drink to higher levels when they perceive that the amount of other students’ drinking is high. Social norms campaigns and other clarification exercises are evidence-based practices designed to decrease actual drinking behavior among students. Once the misperception is clarified, students may drink at safer levels. Despite differences in drinking behavior among institutions, all campuses across the State of Missouri can benefit from a comprehensive approach to address problem drinking behavior on campus, which includes the reduction of misperceptions of actual drinking behavior.

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For more information about how PIP uses the Carnegie Classification System, refer to the Fact Sheet found at <http://pip.missouri.edu/research.html>