

Binge Drinking and Other Risk Behaviors among College Students

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College Risk Behaviors Study

Introduction

The College Risk Behaviors Study (CRBS) was administered during the 2016 spring semester to a random sample of full-time, undergraduate, University of Delaware students. Each was asked via email to follow an enclosed link and complete the online survey. These students were offered \$5 in flex credit as compensation for their time. By the end of the semester, 1,172 students chose to participate, corresponding to a 39% response rate, a rate equivalent to or better than similar online surveys. Given the chance to specifically opt out of the survey, fewer than 1% of students chose to do so.

The sample is similar to the overall student body in distribution of gender and race/ethnicity, with slightly higher percentages of females and white students in the sample than in the total UD student population. Due to the large difference in gender, the data were weighted to adjust the sample gender ratio to match that of the population.

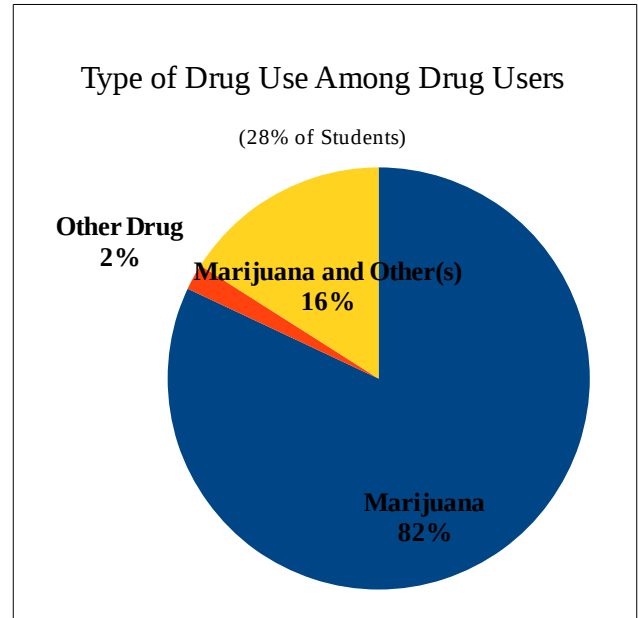
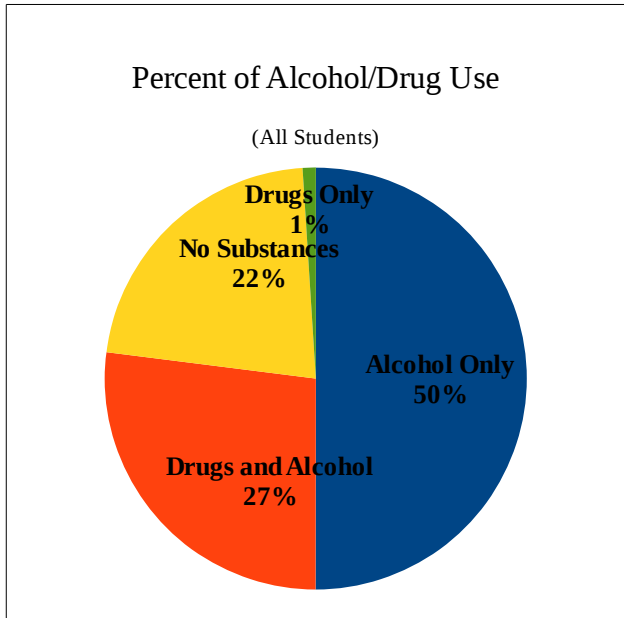
This report will address several issues relating to substance consumption using data from these participants. First, consumption prevalence rates will be presented for varying levels of alcohol consumption, with gender and race/ethnicity differences and similarities highlighted. Second, an in-depth analysis of the potential consequences of alcohol use and abuse will illustrate the negative impact of these behaviors. Finally, data from past studies will be presented to indicate trends over the past 20 years at University of Delaware.

Characteristics of the Sample		
	Sample	UD
Gender		
Male	31%	42%
Female	69%	58%
Race		
White	74%	75%
Black	6%	5%
Hispanic	7%	7%
Asian	9%	5%
Other*	4%	8%
Residence		
On-Campus	51%	
Off-Campus	49%	
Class Year		
Freshmen	25%	
Sophomore	23%	
Junior	24%	
Senior	28%	
Age		
18	16%	
19	25%	
20	25%	
21	22%	
22	10%	
23 or older	3%	

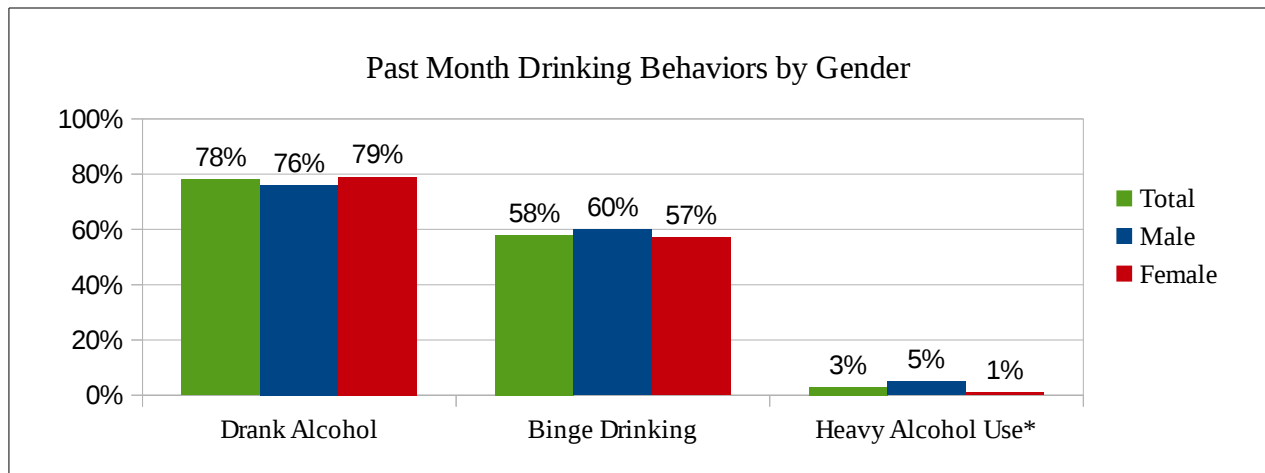
* International students are considered “other” under race in University statistics, but associated with their self-reported race in this study, which accounts for the difference seen here in race/ethnicity proportions.

Alcohol Consumption Prevalence Rates

In general, the substance use of choice among students was alcohol. Though approximately 28% of students reported using illegal drugs, the vast majority were also using alcohol, with less than 1% of students using just illegal drugs. Of students using drugs, about three-quarters were using only marijuana.



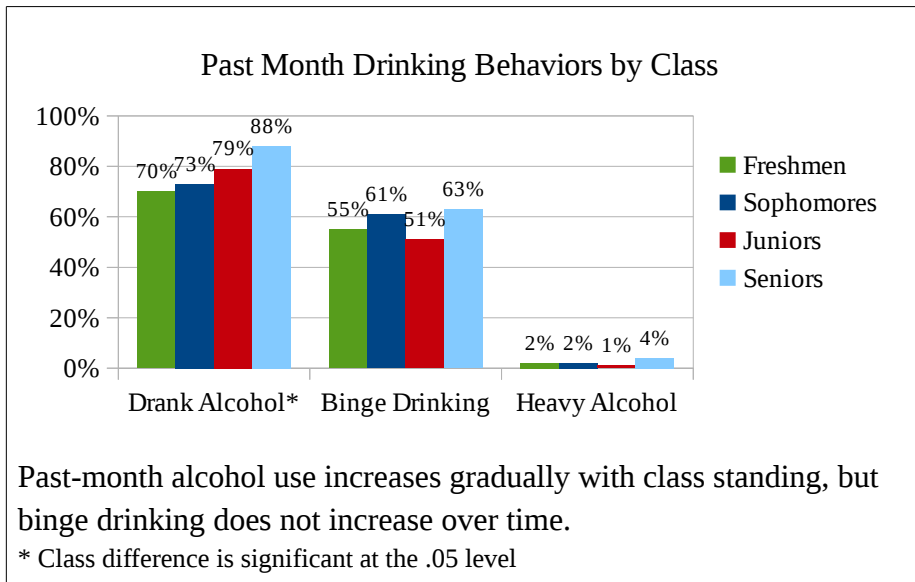
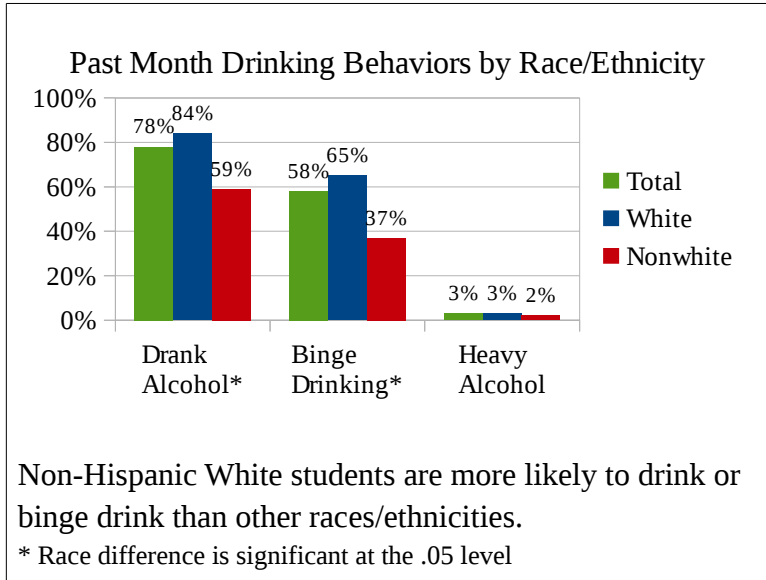
Alcohol was the most used substance, with 82% of students reporting drinking alcohol in the past month. The majority of students (57%) binge drank five or more drinks in a single sitting during the past month. Males (64%) were significantly more likely to engage in binge drinking than were females (53%). Heavy alcohol use (drinking on at least two-thirds of the past 30 days) is much lower, with 2% of students reporting heavy drinking habits.



Though women are as likely to drink alcohol or binge drink as men, men are more likely to be heavy alcohol users.

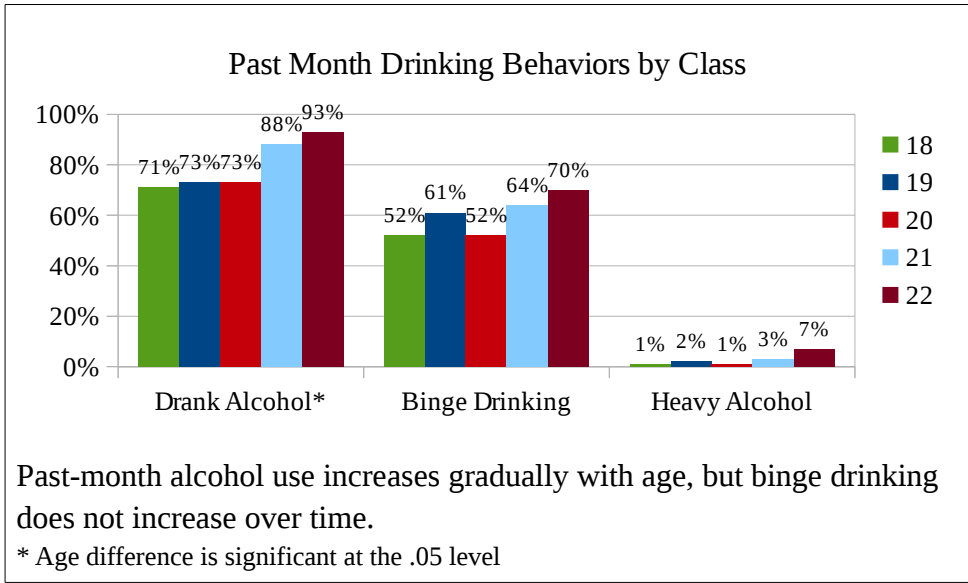
* Gender difference is significant at the .05 level

Additional differences emerge when alcohol use is examined by race/ethnicity. Past month alcohol consumption was much more common among non-Hispanic Whites (84%) than it was for minority students (59%). This is also true of binge drinking behaviors, with approximately two-thirds (65%) of White students reported binge drinking, and slightly more than one-third (37%) of students identifying with other races reported similar drinking.

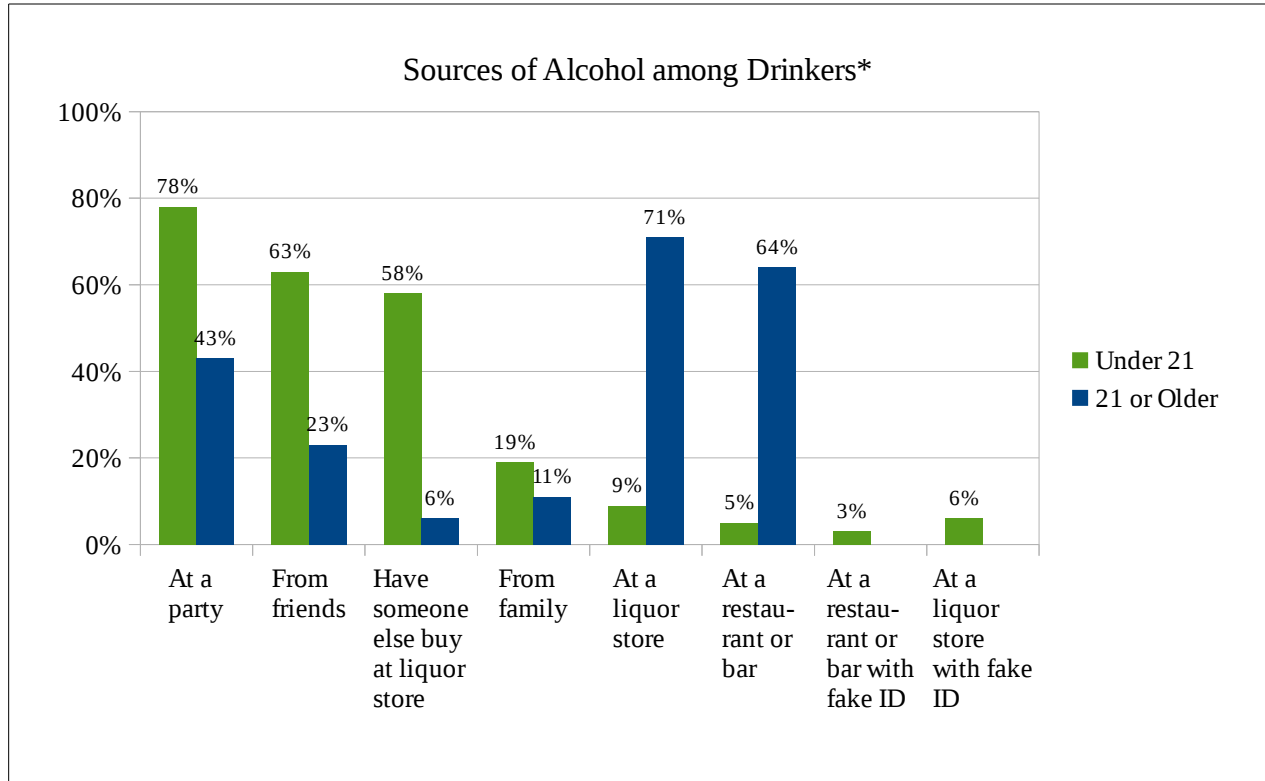


When broken down by class year, a steady increase in alcohol consumption can be seen over time. This applies to drinking in general, but it is not significant for binge drinking and or heavy alcohol use.

Looking at drinking habits by age rather than class shows similar trends, with casual alcohol consumption again increasing as students get older.



Students report getting alcohol from various sources in various ways. For those underage, parties and friends are the most likely sources, followed closely by having someone else (presumably also a friend) buy it for them. Turning 21 opens legal purchasing options at restaurants, bars and liquor stores. Those age 21 and older are much more likely to buy from these sources, and relatedly less likely to rely on parties and friends. These informal sources, however, still remain a source among these older students.

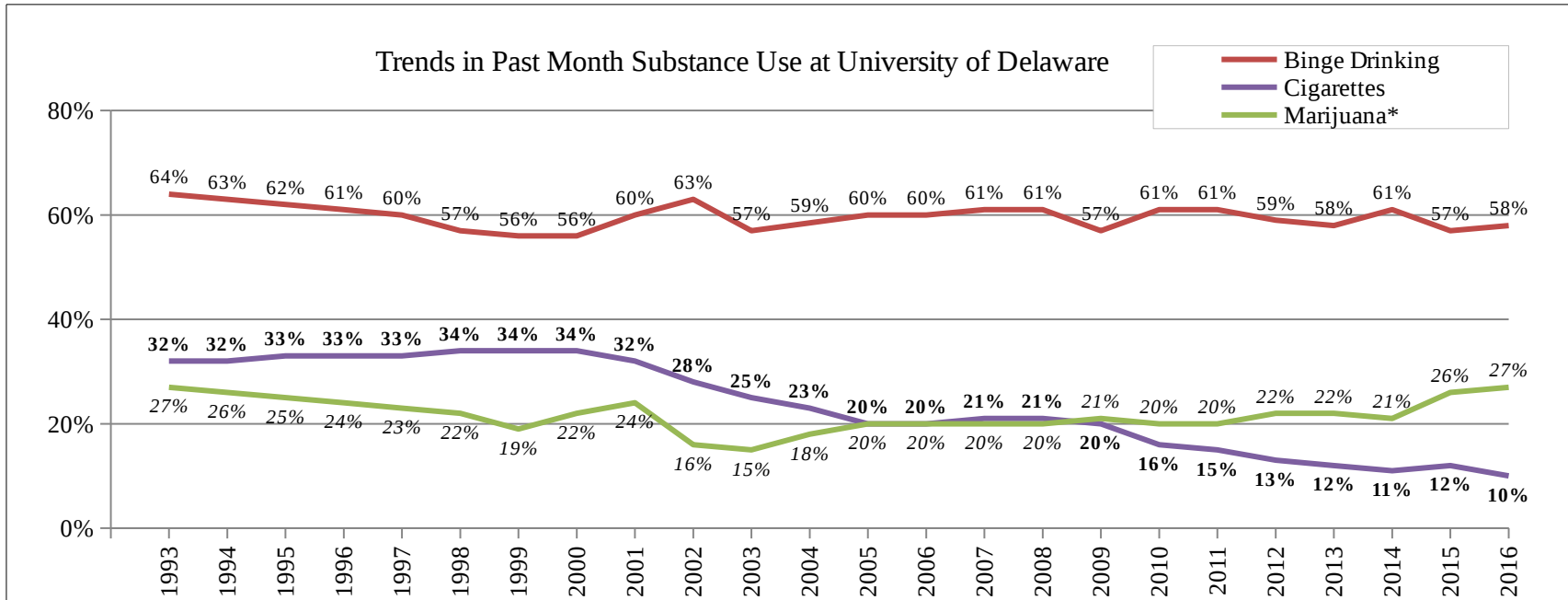


Also worth noting is that the use of false identification to obtain alcohol is low. When looking only at those too young to purchase alcohol legally, only 7% of students report using a fake ID to purchase the alcohol at a restaurant, bar, or liquor store in the past year.

* Students were asked, hypothetically, if they wanted alcohol, where they would get it. The percentages reported here reflect the proportion of alcohol-consuming students who reported they would “often” or “very often” get alcohol from these sources.

Consumption Trends

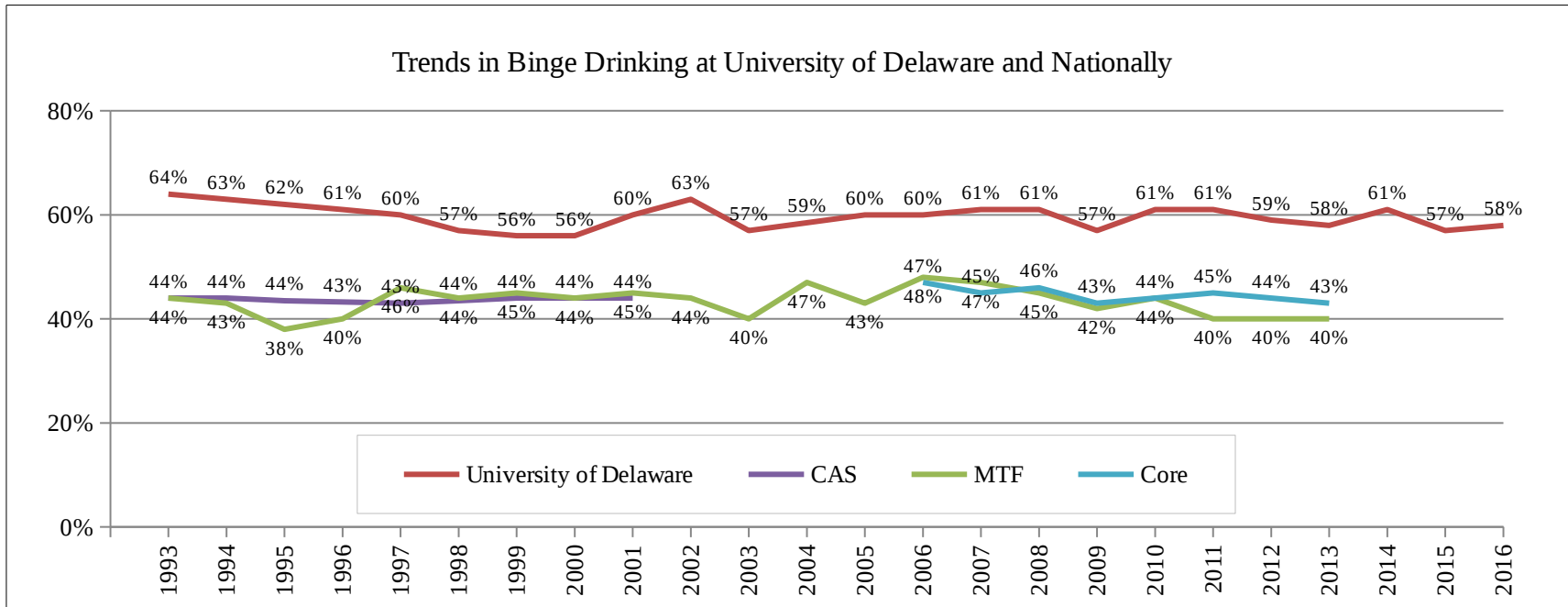
The College Risk Behaviors Study was not the first survey of University of Delaware students. In 1993, from 1997 to 2003, and again in 2005, University of Delaware participated in the College Alcohol Study. As the trends below indicate, cigarette use has steadily declined over time while marijuana use has recently risen to levels not seen since 2002.



Note: Data from 1993, 1997-2003, and 2005 are from the College Alcohol Study. Statistics for 1994-1996, 2004, and 2006-2007 are imputed by averaging adjacent years. Data beginning in 2008 are from the College Risk Behaviors Study. For these trend lines, the data from 2011 to the present were adjusted to include weights for gender.

* Trends for marijuana use differ from those reported in previous years. For 2008-2015, marijuana use was measured solely with questions about typical frequency of use. Beginning in 2016, marijuana was measured primarily with questions about actual use over the past 30 days, which is the same question type used for other substances and used in national data reports. Because the results for these questions differ for methodological reasons, the data for 2008-2015 have been adjusted here to reflect the estimated impact that this change had on the statistics. It should be noted that the marked increase in past month marijuana use in 2015 and 2016 is present even when using the previous method for estimating marijuana and therefore the recent increase in marijuana use reported by UD students is not a result of the change in measure.

Compared to national trend data, University of Delaware binge drinking rates are consistently higher than the national average. Even during the decline in the late 1990s, UD's rate was significantly higher than rates calculated nationally. The exact reason for this is not clear and it may be a combination of several factors. It is possible, for example, that other institutions in the north-east area with a high proportion of students living on-campus are also above the national average to some extent. Unfortunately, data that separate out institutions similar to University of Delaware are not currently publicly available.

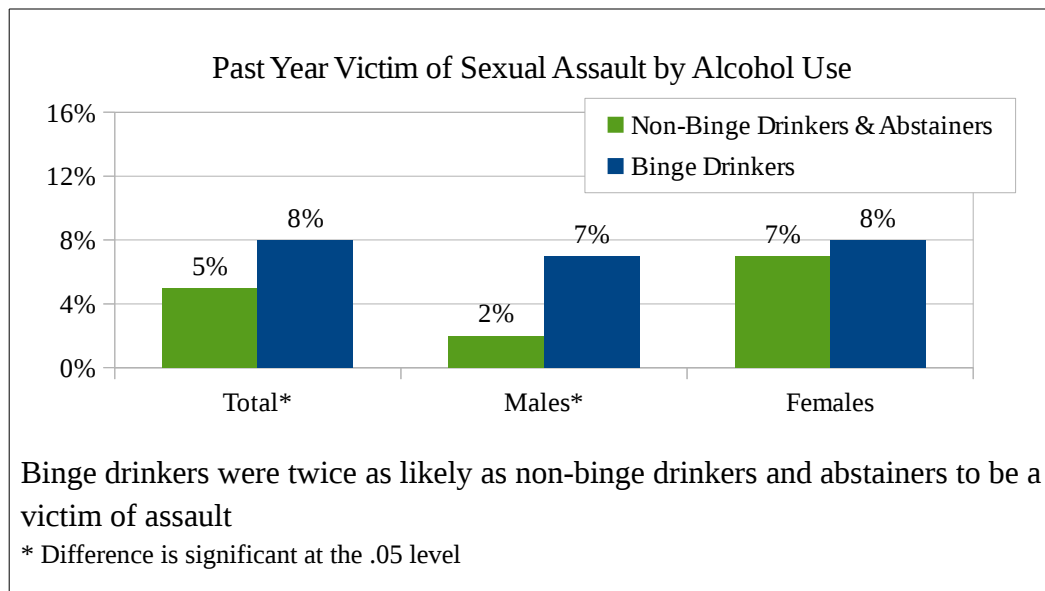
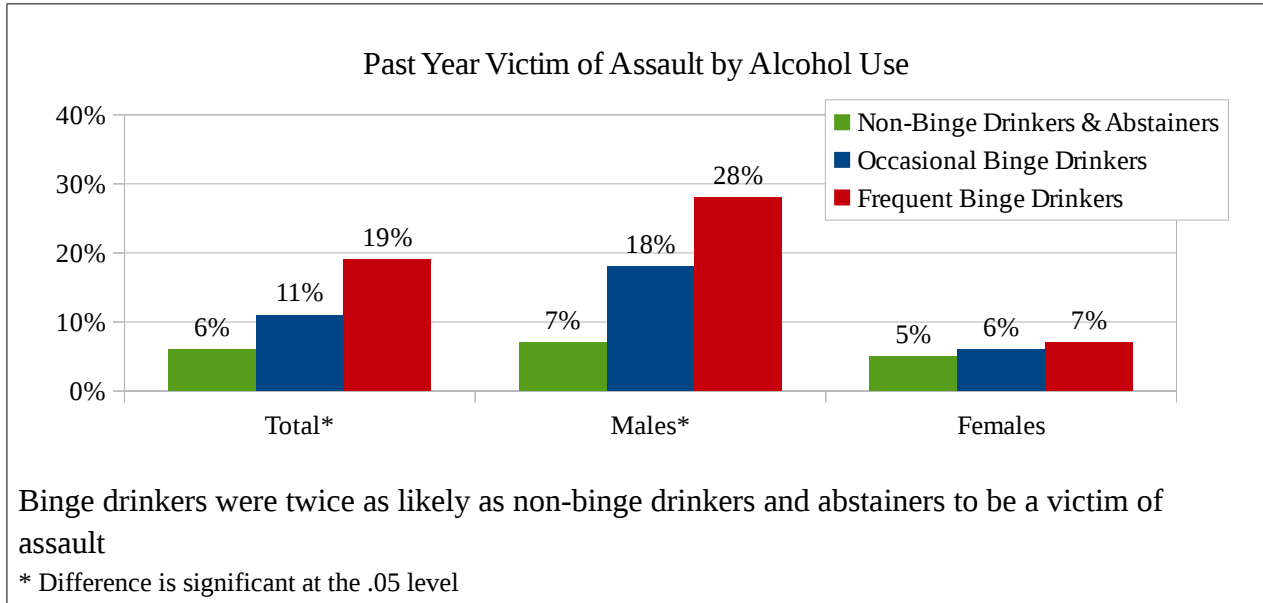


The changes in binge drinking rates at University of Delaware appear to be a local phenomenon and not something occurring nationally.

Note: National data from the College Alcohol Study (CAS) 1993-2001, the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey 2006-2013, and from Monitoring the Future (MTF) 1993-2013. UD statistics for 1994-1996, 2004, and 2006-2007 are imputed by averaging adjacent years. The timeframe for binge drinking is defined differently between studies. The UD (1993-2005) and CAS surveys used a timeframe of past two weeks, while the UD (2008-Present) and MTF surveys used past month. Though the timeframe varies, there does not appear to be any increase for using past month rather than past two weeks based on similar numbers from the CAS and MTF.

Consequences of Alcohol Consumption

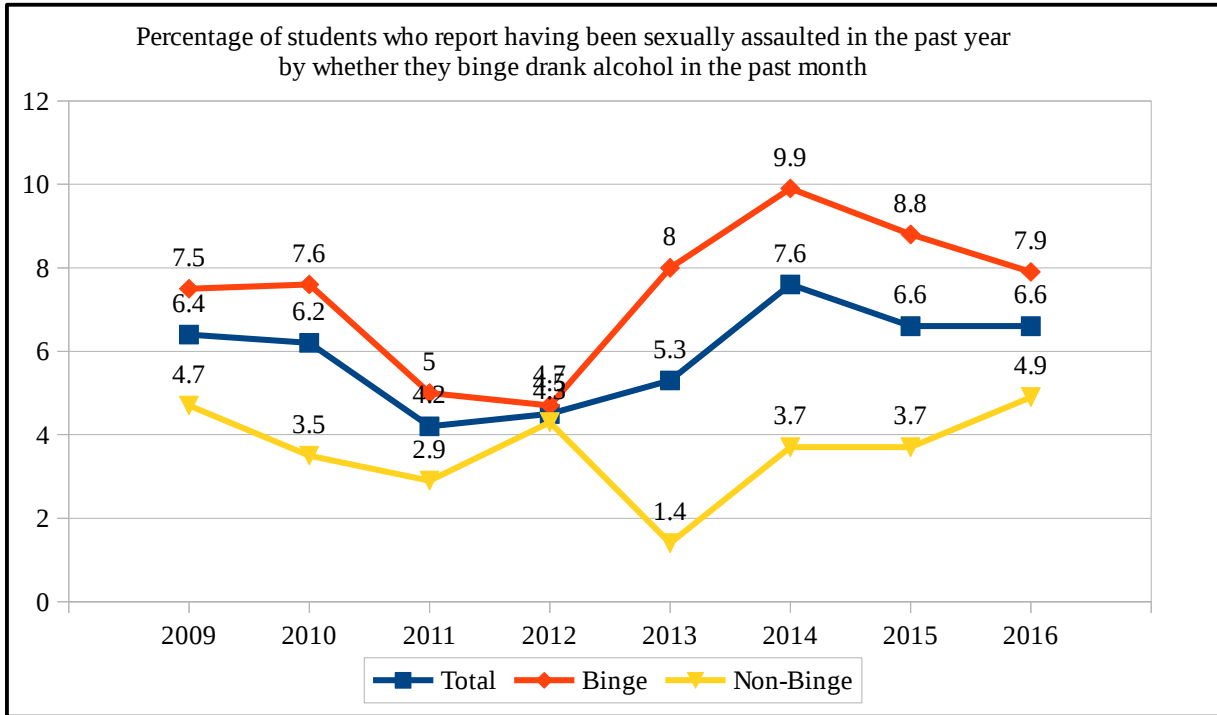
The College Risk Behaviors Study also measured several potential consequences of alcohol consumption and binge drinking. The data below present a comparison between binge drinkers and non-binge drinkers for the likelihood of experiencing these consequences. Binge drinking was defined as drinking five or more drinks in a single sitting. Occasional binge drinkers include students who binge drank one to nine times in the past month, while students who binge drank more often were considered frequent binge drinkers.



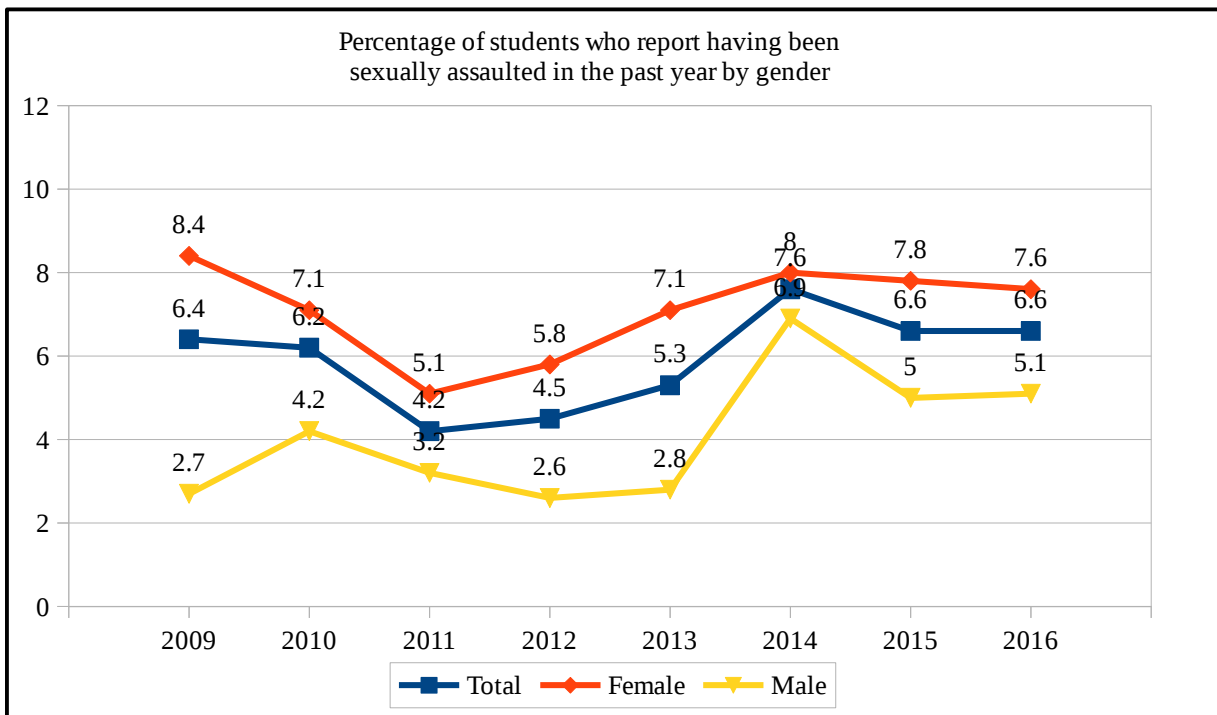
* Victimization questions were defined as the following – Assault: Being attacked or someone threatening to attack you – Sexual Assault: Having been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual intercourse of any kind including vaginal, anal, or oral sex. All were limited to incidents occurring in the past year.

Consequences Trends

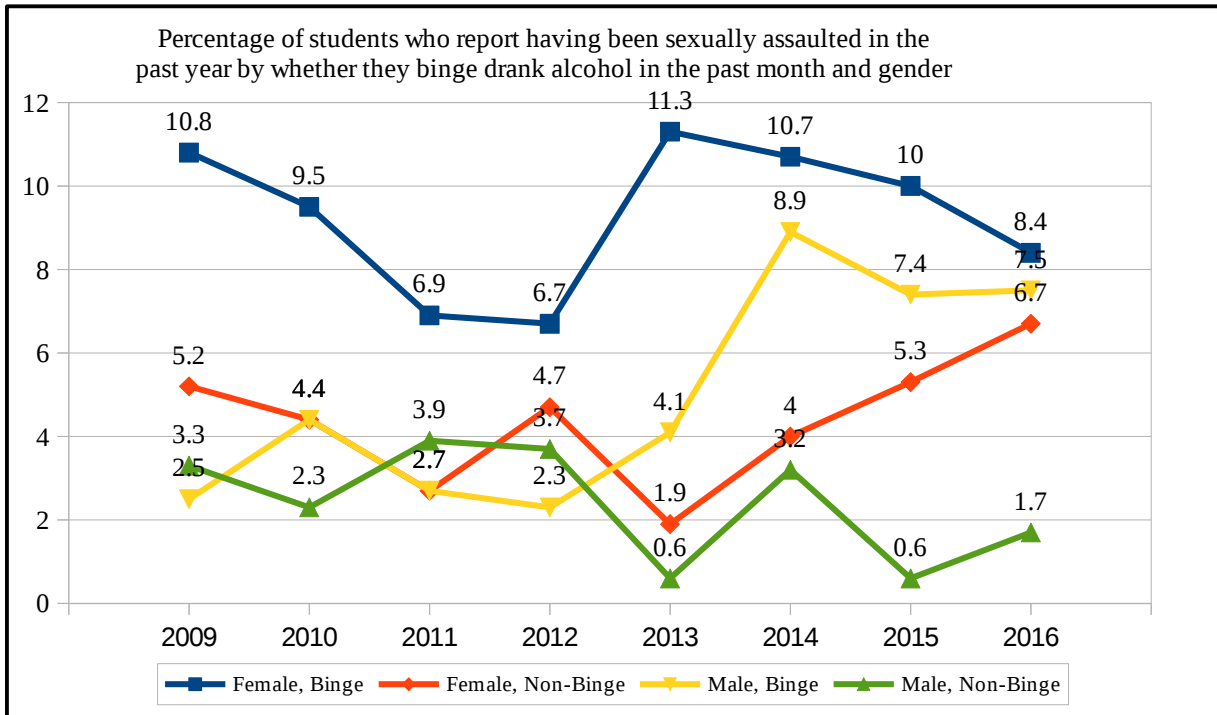
Tracking the changes in consequences over time, the data suggest that sexual assaults have increased since 2012. This increase is only seen among student who binge drink.



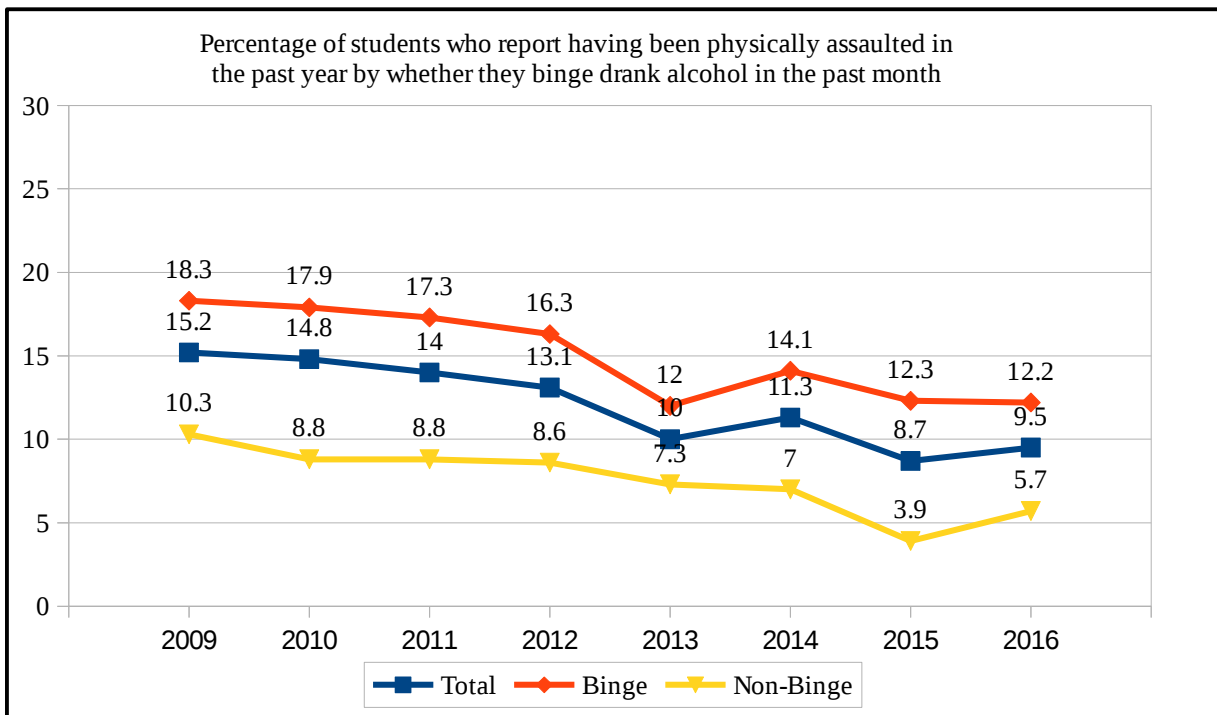
Examining this by gender indicates that the increase is seen for both men and women.



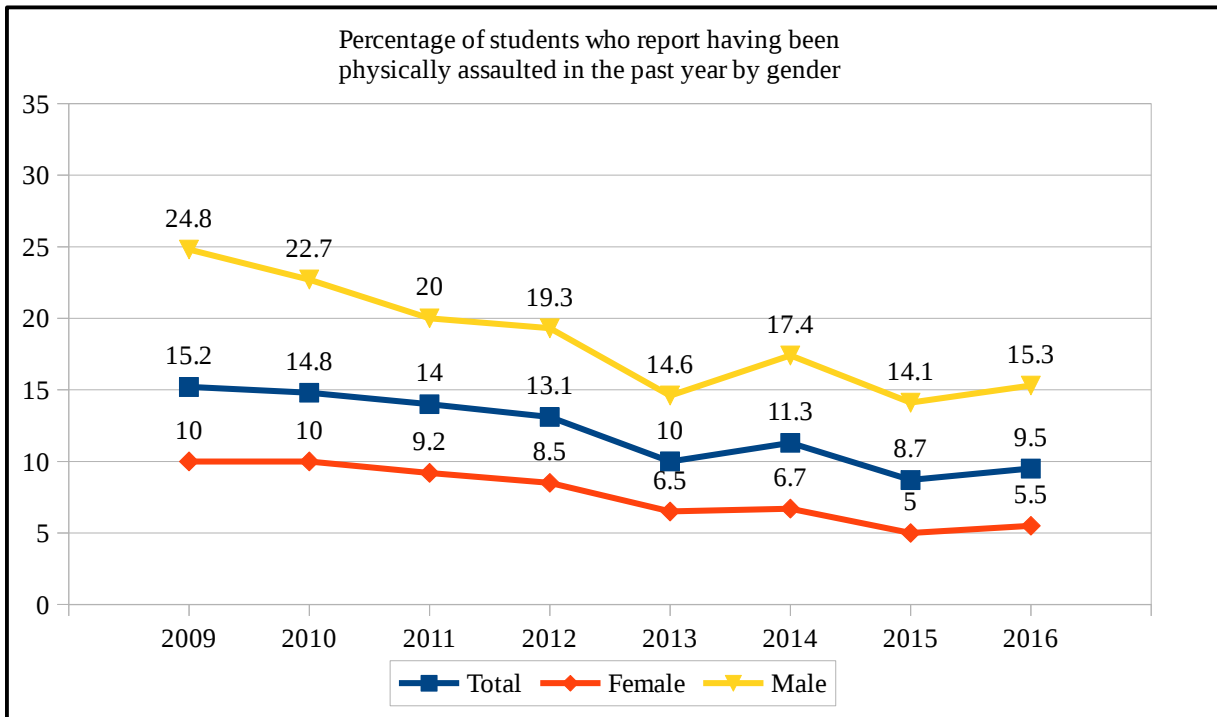
A rise in victimization can be seen for both male and female students who binge drink. For males who do not drink, there appears to be a decrease.



Tracking the changes in consequences over time, the data suggest that physical assaults in general have decreased steadily regardless of drinking behavior.



Examining this by gender indicates that the decrease is seen for both men and women.



Breaking down the statistics by both gender and binge drinking behavior indicates a steady decline in each category, with binge drinking males – who with the highest rate had the most potential for a decline – seeing the largest of the declines.

