

Alcohol at Events

October 4, 2023

Prepared for UASU Executive Committee by
Department of Research and Advocacy



Overview

This survey ran on the UASU Perks platform from September 21 to October 2, 2023. It reached 1,164 respondents, almost entirely current undergraduate students. This survey was conducted at the request of the VP Student Life, with significant direct or indirect input from UASU programming management, the VP Academic, and the Law Students' Association (LSA). It includes questions sourced from the 2019 UAlberta NCHA II (which had 1,485 respondents), and influenced by a recent internal LSA survey (n=150) and position letter about decentering alcohol at events. Comparative data is included when valid. Key findings:

- 44% adhere to restrictions (partial or complete, recent or longstanding) against consuming alcohol, e.g. medical reasons, religious principles, or recovery.
- Alcohol/bar service makes 22% of respondents less likely to attend an event (consistent with LSA survey data) and 15% more likely to attend (much lower than LSA survey data).
- Around 4% have faced significant academic impacts from alcohol use in the past 12 months, a notable increase from the 2019 UAlberta NCHA.
- Drinking behavior is becoming more concentrated. Around 3% drink daily, a major increase from the 2019 UAlberta NCHA, but most students drink less frequently than in 2019. Only 47% have had alcohol in the last 30 days, down from 67% in the NCHA.
- In the past two weeks, 19.7% of students have had five or more drinks in a single sitting/event, i.e. binge drinking, lower than the 2019 UAlberta NCHA (26.7%). This reduction in binge drinking is statistically significant with 99% confidence.
- Faculties of concern: Business, Law, Engineering, Nursing, Education.
- Binge drinking tends to increase by year of study.
- $\frac{2}{3}$ are comfortable at events that serve alcohol, and $\frac{1}{3}$ are uncomfortable.
- Over 85% are comfortable at events that do not allow alcohol.
- 7.5% are uncomfortable at both dry events and events that serve alcohol.
- Students are somewhat evenly split (leaning negative) on whether the campus community needs more events that serve alcohol, *and* on whether it needs more events that don't allow alcohol.
- Students are also evenly split on whether decentralizing alcohol in campus events is an important goal. The proportion of students who strongly agree (~9-13%) stays constant when looking at the students who drink the most.
- The majority of students somewhat agree that the University and the UASU are doing enough to decentralize alcohol in campus events. Those who strongly agree that it is a priority are more evenly split, leaning negative, on whether enough is being done.

"Do you adhere to restrictions against consuming alcohol (including but not limited to medical reasons, religious principles, recovery, etc.)?"

- Yes: 43.9%
- No: 45.7%
- Prefer not to say: 10.3%

It is fair to estimate that roughly half of UAlberta undergraduate students adhere to personal restrictions against consuming alcohol. These are not necessarily total restrictions, and this number likely includes those who have been in recovery for shorter periods of time. Of those who answered 'yes,' 49% selected 'don't drink' in a later question, and 30% had had a drink at some point in the last 30 days.

"What impact does the presence of alcohol have on your likelihood to attend an event?"

- Negative impact (I am less likely to attend events that have alcohol/bar service): 22.2%
- Positive impact (I am more likely to attend an event that offers alcohol/bar service): 15.5%
- Neutral (The presence of alcohol does not significantly impact whether or not I attend an event): 62.3%

As a point of comparison, the recent LSA survey asked: "Did alcohol play a role in determining whether you did or did not attend an LSA event?"

- Yes, I did NOT attend because of alcohol or other people's relationship with alcohol at LSA events (i.e. I do not drink or do not enjoy being around people who are drinking): 21.5%
- Yes, I did attend because of alcohol or other people's relationships with alcohol at LSA events (i.e. I enjoy drinking or enjoy being around people who are drinking): 36.1%
- No, alcohol had no influence on my decision to attend, or not attend, an LSA event: 42.4%

"In the last 12 months, has alcohol affected your academic performance? (Examples: receiving a lower grade on an exam, or an important project; received a lower grade in the course; received an incomplete or dropped the course; or experienced a significant disruption in thesis, dissertation, research, or practicum work.)"

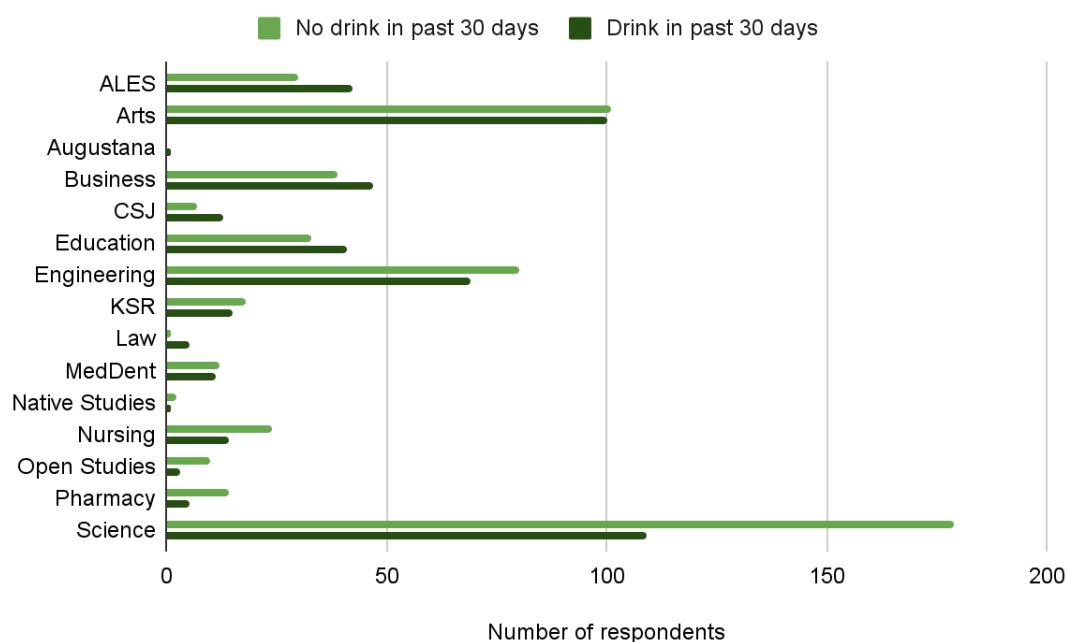
- Yes: 3.9% (compared to 2.8% in 2019 UAlberta NCHA and 3.6% in 2019 national NCHA data)
- No: 96.1%

"How frequently, if at all, have you drunk alcohol?"

	This survey	2019 UAlberta NCHA
Have had a drink in each of the last 30 days	2.9%	0.5%
Have had a drink in 10 to 29 of the last 30 days	5.4%	9.8%
Have had a drink in 1 to 9 of the last 30 days	38.3%	56.3%
Have had alcohol, but not in the last 30 days	28.3%	15.8%
Have never had alcohol	25.0%	17.6%
<i>Composite: Any consumption in last 30 days</i>	46.7%	66.6%

This data suggests a concentration of drinking behavior, with a small cohort of students drinking more and most students drinking less, or not at all.

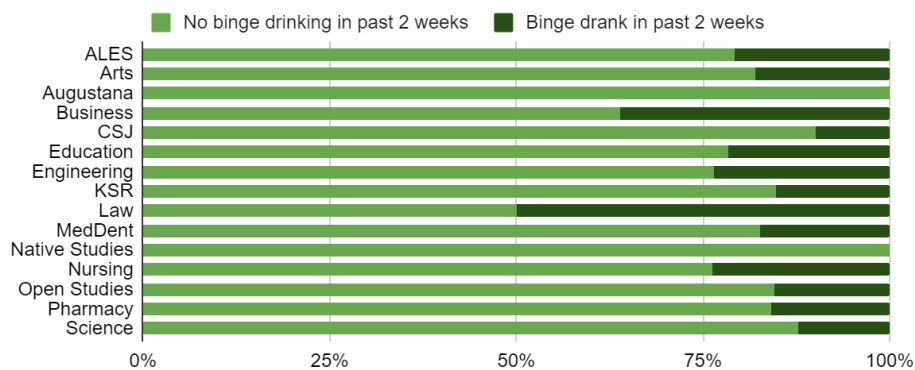
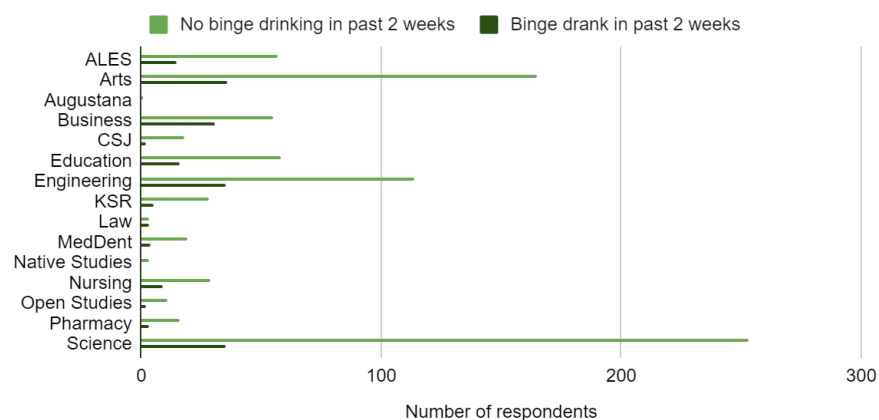
Faculty-level cross-tabulations are not reliable for smaller faculties, but within the limits of our sample, students from ALES, Business, CSJ, Education, and Law were more likely than not to have had a drink in the past 30 days. Students from Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Science were less likely.



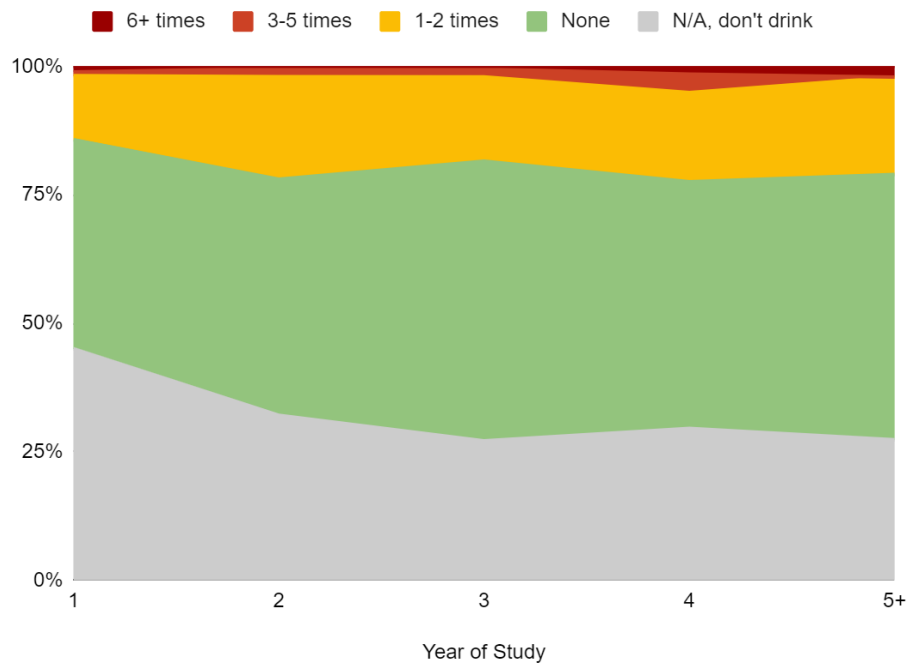
"In the last TWO WEEKS, how many times have you consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in a sitting/event?"

	This survey	2019 UAlberta NCHA
N/A, don't drink	33.2%	23.0%
None	47.1%	50.3%
1-2 times	17.2%	22.4%
3-5 times	1.5%	3.6%
6+ times	1.0%	0.6%
<i>Composite: Any binge drinking in last 2 weeks</i>	19.7%	26.6%

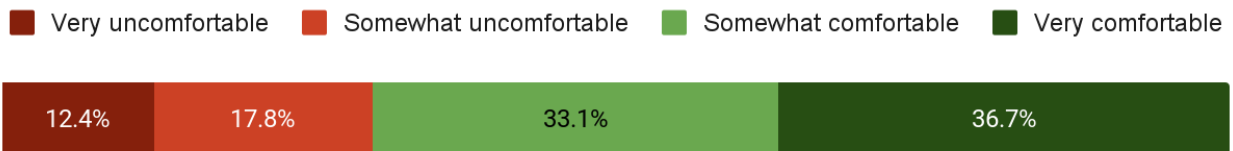
Binge drinking has decreased, significant with 99% confidence. Faculty-level cross-tabulations are not reliable for smaller faculties, but within the limits of our sample, binge drinking appeared heavily concentrated in Law and Business, with Nursing, Education, and ALES also above average.



Binge drinking tends to increase by year of study. Note that the sample has approximately accurate proportions of years of study.



"How comfortable are you at events that serve alcohol?"

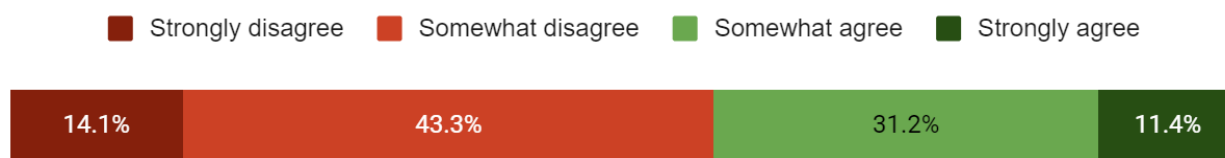


"How comfortable are you at events that do NOT allow alcohol?"

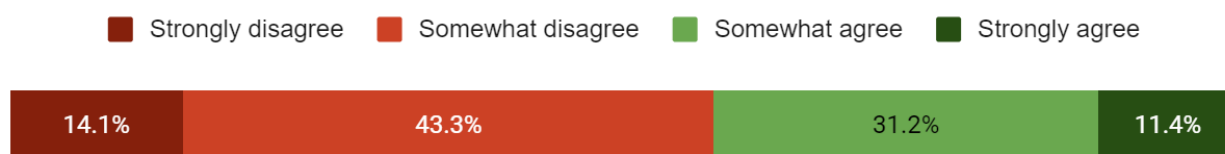


Comparing this question with the one before, around 7.5% of students answered both questions as somewhat or very uncomfortable — that is, they are uncomfortable at events regardless of the presence of alcohol. This group accounts for more than half of the students who are uncomfortable at 'dry' events, meaning that 'dry' events are probably a comfortable choice for virtually all students who attend events.

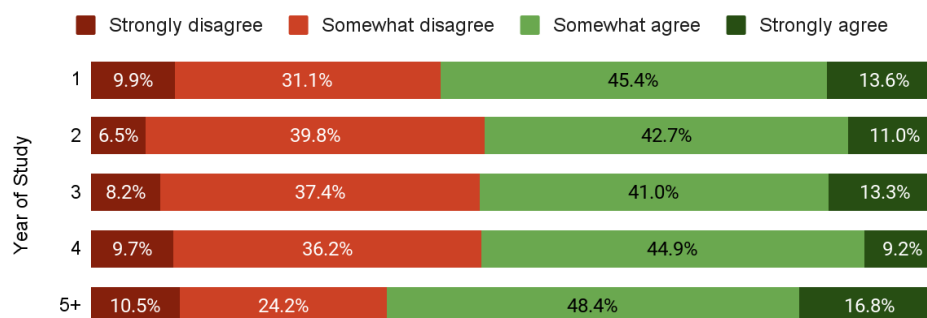
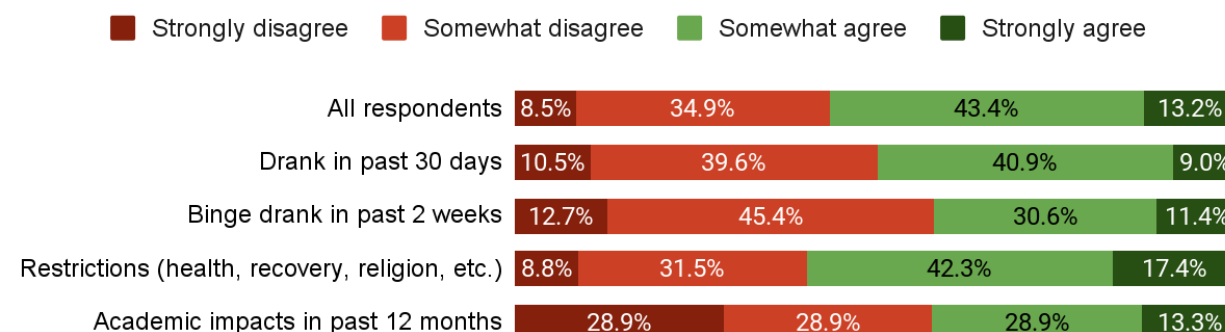
"Agree or disagree? The campus community needs more events that serve alcohol."



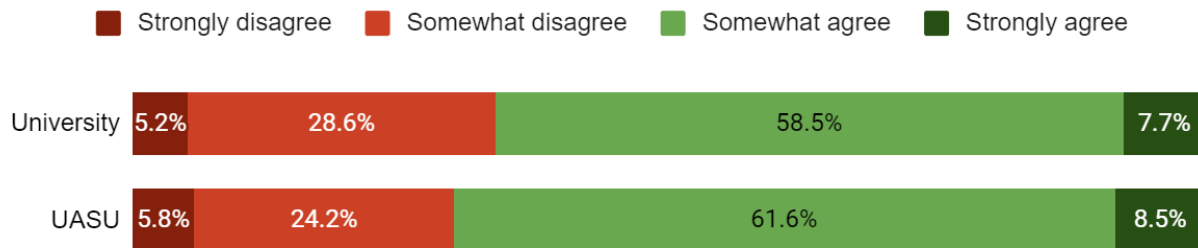
"Agree or disagree? The campus community needs more events that do NOT allow alcohol."



"Agree or disagree? Decentralizing alcohol in campus events is an important goal."



"Agree or disagree? The _____ is doing enough to decentralize alcohol in campus events."



The majority of students somewhat agree that the University and the UASU are doing enough to decentralize alcohol in campus events. Those who strongly agree that it is a priority are more evenly split, leaning negative, on whether enough is being done.

"The UASU is doing enough..." (X axis) broken down by
 "Decentralizing alcohol...is a priority" (Y axis)

