

Task Force on College Gambling Policies Policy and Program Recommendations – Fact Sheet

- In September 2009, the National Task Force on College Gambling Policies released “A Call to Action – Addressing College Gambling: Recommendations for Science-Based Policies and Programs.” The report provides 10 recommendations for higher education institutions to use in creating customizable, science-based policies and programs to address gambling and gambling-related harms on campus.
- The 10 recommendations focus on three key topics: core prohibition and restriction policies, recovery-oriented policies that recognize gambling disorders as a mental health issue, and policies on special events that involve gambling.
- The recommended policies and programs range from establishing a campus-wide committee to develop a comprehensive gambling policy, to making reasonable accommodations for students who may miss class as they focus on recovery, to strengthening the capacity of counseling services to identify and treat gambling disorders.
- The Task Force on College Gambling Policies was established by the Division on Addictions at Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School, and funded by the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG).

Recommendations of the Task Force on College Gambling Policies

1. Establish a campus-wide committee to develop and monitor a comprehensive policy on gambling.
2. Ensure that college policies are consistent with applicable local, state and federal laws.
3. Strive for consistency and universal application with prohibitions and restrictions on gambling and alcohol use at special events.
4. Promote campus-community collaborations that focus on reducing problems with student drinking and gambling.
5. Encourage adjustments in disciplinary actions applied to violators of gambling rules if the student seeks assistance from health or counseling services.
6. Make reasonable accommodations for students focused on recovery from a problem with gambling or alcohol.
7. Measure student attitudes, behaviors, and problems with gambling through campus surveys or by incorporating such measures into existing campus health-related surveys.
8. Promote campus-wide awareness of (1) pathological gambling as a mental health disorder that has a high rate of comorbidity with alcohol use and other addictive disorders, and (2) responsible gaming principles.
9. Employ evidence-based strategies to identify and help students with gambling and alcohol problems.
10. Strengthen the capacity of counseling services to identify and treat gambling disorders.



Why Are These Recommendations Needed?

- Research has shown that teenagers and college-aged young adults are more impulsive and at higher risk for developing gambling disorders than adults.
- While 42 percent of college students gambled during the past year (whether legally or illegally), only 22 percent of U.S. colleges and universities have formal policies on gambling.
- Research shows that college students frequently engage in risky behaviors at higher rates than the general adult population. In spite of increases in college-based prevention measures in the past two decades, addiction-related problems continue to be an issue at U.S. campuses.
- Advances in drug treatment for mood disorders and other psychiatric problems have made it possible for a greater number of students with psychological problems to attend higher education institutions, and such students might be more vulnerable to addictive disorders, including gambling disorders.

How Can These Recommendations Help?

- The recommendations found in the “Call to Action” report will help higher education institutions address the existing void of policies addressing gambling by providing a roadmap for creating effective, research-based policies and programs.
- The recommendations also will stimulate dialogue on college and university campuses about ways to integrate efforts to reduce gambling problems into existing programs focused on addictive behaviors.
- Research shows that when higher education institutions adopt and enforce clear policies, they can be effective in preventing students from getting into trouble. The recommendations of the task force can help schools across the country create and establish policies on gambling that will support the entire campus community through education, training, prevention, treatment and recovery.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- The Task Force’s complete “Call to Action” report and several other resources on this subject are available free of charge at the NCRG’s website – www.ncrg.org.
- The NCRG’s archived webinar “Youth and College Gambling: New Directions, New Discoveries” featured members of the task force and included a discussion of the recommendations. The webinar, which is available at www.ncrg.org/public_education/archived-sessions.cfm, is a great reference for anyone interested in learning about science-based methods for minimizing gambling-related harms among college students and youth.