At a Glance: Substance Use and Sense of Belonging

This ‘At a Glance’ examines students’ substance use behaviors and sense of belonging on campus. Overall, while drug use is associated with lower sense of belonging, alcohol use appears to facilitate social interaction, may be indicative of organizational involvement, and is correlated with a higher sense of belonging.

Binge Drinking and Sense of Belonging

Students who binge drink (consume 5+ drinks in a 2 hour period at least once over the past 2 weeks) or frequently binge drink (binge drinking 3+ times in 2 weeks) report a higher sense of belonging to the campus community than non-binge drinkers (agree + strongly agree).

Cannabis Use and Sense of Belonging

There is a strong negative correlation between frequency of cannabis use and students feeling a sense of belonging to the campus community (agree + strongly agree). Students who use cannabis frequently have a lower sense of belonging than those who use less often or not at all.

Other Drug Use and Sense of Belonging

Students who had used any illegal drug (other than cannabis) at least once in the past year report a lower sense of belonging (agree + strongly agree) than students who had not used. Other drug use includes hallucinogens such as LSD, PCP, ecstasy, and magic mushrooms, K2/spice, cocaine, methamphetamines, inhalants, and heroin.