

CAYUGA'S WATCHERS, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015

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Executive Summary

In 2013, Cayuga's Watchers launched at Cornell University as an independent, student-led, educational 501(c)(3) non-profit organization designed to curb high-risk drinking and promote student safety. Today, Cayuga's Watchers has established itself as an organization that stands for student safety, responsibility, and leadership.



Cayuga's Watchers has employed over 180 students, trained 1,500 students in bystander intervention, and worked nearly 100 campus social events. Among other notable achievements, the organization's efforts -- in tandem with other University programs and initiatives -- contributed to a nearly 30% reduction in campus alcohol-related hospitalizations on Slope Day.¹ To build on these successes and others in the coming year, Cayuga's Watchers plans to expand its comprehensive bystander intervention training program, launch an athlete-focused student training initiative, and service 25% more campus social events.

Currently, the organization's greatest challenge is longevity: as a non-profit that offers its services to Cornell free-of-charge, Cayuga's Watchers relies on the generosity of other 501(c)(3)s, charitable foundations, and individual contributors to provide the capital needed to maintain operational capacity. To ensure continued viability, we are excited to be launching an advisory council that will further our partnership with the Cornell community. We invite anyone who is interested to contact us with questions.

We are deeply appreciative of the outpouring of support we've received to date, and hope you will find this report as exciting as we do. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

¹ Gannett Health Services, Office of Health Promotion, May 2015.

Statement of Need

High risk drinking -- defined as drinking in a way that increases risk for negative consequences, including lower grades, problems at work, trouble with campus or local law professionals, and personal injury -- is a prominent issue on college campuses nationwide. According to the National Collegiate Health Improvement Program (NCHIP), two out of every five college students engage in high risk drinking, with an estimated 1,800 student deaths occurring annually. Furthermore, excessive alcohol consumption is correlated with increased frequencies of personal injury, sexual violence, in addition to poor academic and athletic performance.

Cornell University is not immune to this national trend. In fact, a recent survey of Cornell students indicated that 40.5% of respondents had engaged in high-risk drinking at least once in a two-week period, which mirrors the national average. The number of alcohol-related incidents is explained, at least in part, by students' misperceptions about drinking. In a survey of students, 70% of respondents say that it is "never socially acceptable" to "drink to the point of blacking out."² However, when asking those same respondents about what *their peers* believed, surveyors found that only 20% of respondents, indicated that they thought that it was never socially acceptable to drink to the point of blacking out. Thus, the bottom line is that the observed disconnect between perception and reality places undue pressures on students to conform to risky behaviors – namely, an expectation to binge drink.

Statement of Impact

Rather than sanctioning students for misbehaving, we believe that the most effective way to combat high-risk drinking is by engaging students to be the solution to their own problem. For this reason, we launched Cayuga's Watchers in 2013 as an independent, student-led, 501(c)(3) educational non-profit organization designed to promote student safety. Cayuga's Watchers recruits, hires, and trains students to anonymously attend campus social events at the request of a hosting organization. Using non-confrontational bystander intervention techniques, employees engage with event-goers to mitigate the harms associated with high-risk drinking, including alcohol poisoning, sexual assault, and bodily injury. Cayuga's Watchers also provides free bystander intervention training to the Cornell community.

² Gannett Health Services, Cornell University, "Report on Alcohol and Social Life Surveys," Fall 2011, Spring 2012, and Fall 2012, available at <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/cms/pdf/aod/upload/Alcohol-and-Social-Life-Survey-Results.pdf>

Objectives

We have three main organizational objectives. First, we aim to mitigate the immediate dangers associated with high-risk drinking and, ultimately, reduce the number of alcohol-related emergencies that occur on campus. Second, we want to change campus culture from one that pressures students to engage in risky behaviors with one that emphasizes student responsibility. And ultimately, in partnership with the University, we strive to become an established national model that all colleges can emulate.

Year In Review

Events

Cayuga's Watchers was **requested to work 105 total events this past year, of which the organization staffed 67 events.** The majority of these events occurred during the fourth quarter, the busiest time of the social calendar. In fact, during this ten-week period, Cayuga's Watchers averaged a five-event working capacity per weekend.

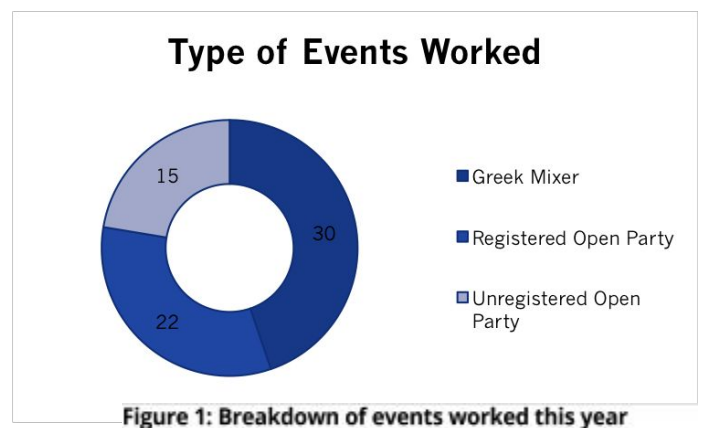
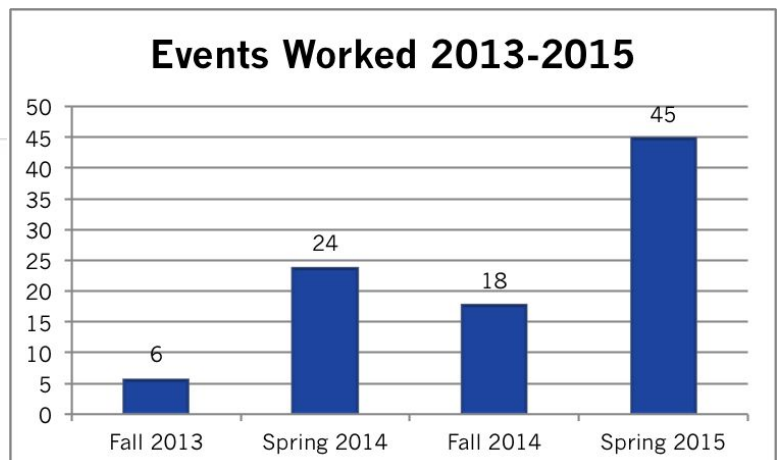


Figure 1: Breakdown of events worked this year

Cayuga's Watchers has worked primarily with the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils. Most of Cayuga's Watchers' events cater to larger student gatherings, but the organization aims to work events of all sizes, especially those posing the greatest risk to students. **About 15 of the event requests from the 2014-2015 academic year were solicited for social events not registered with the University.** Working unregistered events has been a point of particular emphasis for Cayuga's Watchers, as these events tend to be the most "high-risk."

Figure 2: This figure reflects the total number of events worked over the course of the past two years. There is a dip in events worked in the fall semester as a result of the current Quarter System to which most Greek houses adhere.



Slope Day

Because of our emphasis on working especially high-risk events, Cayuga's Watchers partnered in May 2015 with the Slope Day Programming Board (SDPB) to assist in managing the event. The SDPB requested 25 student workers -- the largest single-event workforce ever supplied by Cayuga's Watchers -- to patrol the slope during the festivities. Slope Day attendees tend to heavily "pre-game"³ the concert on the slope, which presents particular hazards for students and employees alike.

During a four-hour period on Slope Day, **Watchers performed nearly 100 non-emergency intervening actions and "flagged" medical staff and event personnel more than 30 times.** Of these 30 instances, seven students were then transported for medical attention. Perhaps most encouragingly, the entire workforce reported feeling "very comfortable" remaining sober throughout the event, during which they were surrounded by intoxicated individuals. These efforts led to a decline from 53 transports in 2014 to 38 transports in 2015, **culminating in a nearly 30% reduction in alcohol-related hospitalizations from last Slope Day.** Accordingly, we plan to collaborate with SDPB in the future to ensure safer Slope Days.

Training & Employment

One of our principal goals is to offer bystander intervention training to as many Cornell students as possible. A student who is trained, regardless of employment by Cayuga's Watchers, is more likely to act when faced with a potentially risk situation. Simply put, Cornell is a safer place when more students are equipped in effective bystander intervention techniques.

The organization's training program entails (1) recognizing the signs of alcohol poisoning, (2) working with emergency responders, (3) engaging in bystander intervention as it relates to preventing excessive alcohol consumption and sexual assault, (4) and implementing the organization's operating protocols. In order to be eligible for employment, students are required to pass a training exam.



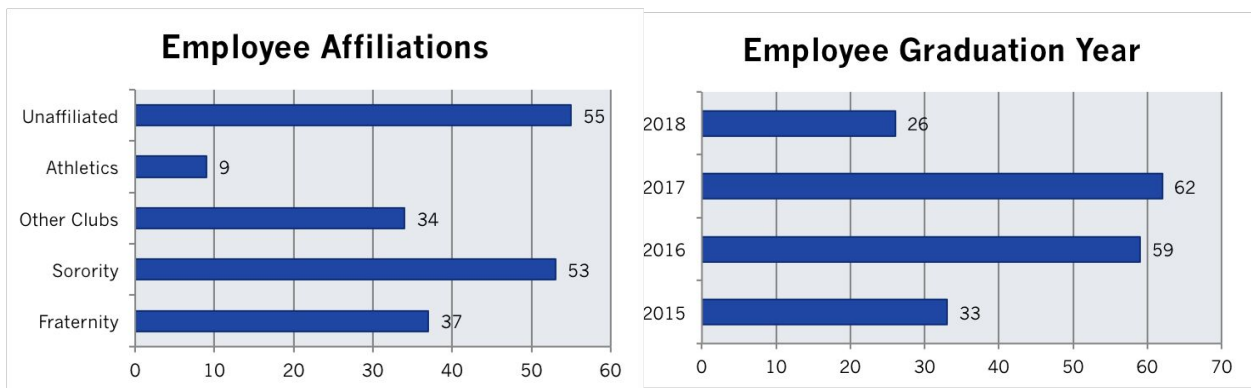
Figure 3: Breakdown of organizations trained by Cayuga's Watchers. Organization trainings this year included 21 of 39 fraternities and 12 of 13 sororities on campus.

³ "Pre-gaming" entails consuming heavy quantities of alcohol prior to attending an event.

In the 2014-2015 operational year, Cayuga’s Watchers employed 180 active student-employees who applied these training principles on a weekly basis. In addition, over the past year, **Cayuga's Watchers has trained over 1,500 students, which comprises approximately 10.5% of the total student population.** Additionally, we conducted personalized training sessions for 12 sororities, 21 fraternities, and four athletic teams, and sponsored public trainings open to the entire Cornell community at least once per academic quarter.

Outreach

Cayuga's Watchers recruited a diverse student workforce and solicited events from a wide ranging cross-section of campus organizations.



In addition to working with **21 Greek houses**, Cayuga's Watchers partnered with student organizations affiliated with the College of Architecture, Art and Planning, the School of Hotel Administration, Cornell Hillel, and HAVEN: the LGBTQ Student Union.

In-Event Experience

Following events worked, each member of the Cayuga's Watchers event team as well as a representative from the hosting organization completed a post-event evaluation form. Employee post-event forms gauge worker experiences while on duty and track non-confrontational interventions performed to prevent prospective emergencies. Post-event feedback forms completed by hosting organization representatives also measure students’ experiences working with an event team. Our data collection protocols have enabled us to cull methods that most effectively deter high-risk drinking.

Almost all Watchers reported that they either felt “very comfortable,” or, at minimum, “comfortable,” when asked about their comfort level at remaining sober at a social event in the presence of alcohol. Eighty-one percent of Watchers reported that they either were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” when engaging in intervening actions with partygoers. Similarly, eighty percent of hosting organization representatives either “strongly agree” or “agree” that there was “an effective means of communication throughout the event.” Ninety-three percent of host respondents state that Watchers were “professional in the execution of their expected duties.”

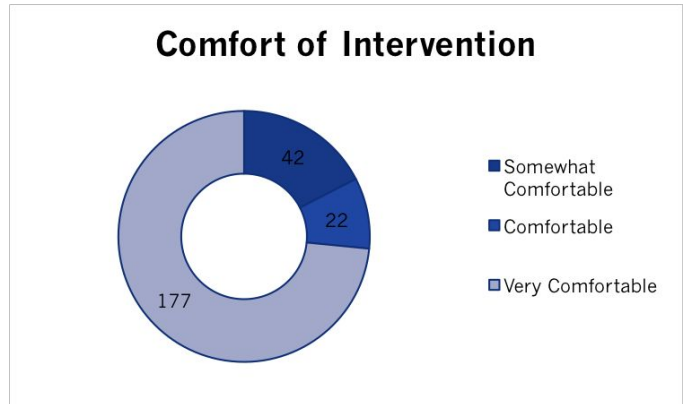


Figure 5: Most employees feel very comfortable performing a non-confrontational bystander intervention.

The most common intervening actions that have been used to mitigate potential emergencies involved starting a friendly conversation with at-risk individuals. Additional measures included dancing with at-risk individuals, identifying friends of at-risk individuals for support, and liaising with hosting organization members to actively assist in managing events. To get a better sense of the impact that our employees are having on a nightly basis, we’ve reproduced a few accounts of our employees interacting with students while on duty:

"[There were a number of at-risk individuals at the event.] One was a girl who had drank too much and was still trying to drink, so I had to cut her off by giving her a non-alcoholic drink and alerted her friends and they took care of her"

"The only intermediate action that I had to take was dancing with a girl whose date was making her feel uncomfortable by trying to [dance up against] her when she didn't want to"

"Intermediate interaction was taken when a girl present was not comfortable dancing with someone and offered to go to the bathroom with her which she happily obliged to."

In addition to the above, our employees activated our Emergency Action Protocol (“EAP”) for the first time in the organization's history in response to a dangerous situation. An employee’s account of that night, including the steps she took to mitigate the dangers posed to the student, herself, and fellow partygoers, exemplifies the best of the organization:

"We encountered one freshman girl in a ball on the floor of an otherwise empty room. We carried her to a couch and she failed the A of ABCDs⁴ (she did not know where she was and struggled with the President's name and the date). So [a brother of the house] called EMS, who arrived in about 5 minutes along with a CUPD officer. [The girl] was examined by EMS and then taken to the hospital in an ambulance."

Community Engagement

In the 2014-15 academic year, we were particularly successful in its community engagement efforts. The organization far surpassed its fundraising goals due in large part to a \$25,000 matching-gift challenge it successfully met at the end of 2014. In total, **Cayuga's Watchers raised \$81,359.55 over the past year**, which represents a 21.1% increase from the previous year. Twenty-eight percent of the organization's total revenue came from institutional grants, while 44% came from individual charitable donations. Additionally, Cayuga's Watchers launched its first-ever crowdsourcing campaign, which was designed principally to attract financial support to fund Slope Day operations. This crowdsourcing campaign, which netted the organization \$1,200, will serve as a platform for future large-scale initiatives. Ultimately, the overwhelming support that Cayuga's Watchers received from individual and institutional donors enabled the organization to devote more resources to training, community education, and student employment.

Plans for Continued Success

In the upcoming year, **Cayuga's Watchers plans to expand its campus footprint by growing the organization membership by 15% and servicing 25% more events.** To support these efforts, the Interfraternity, Panhellenic, and Multicultural Greek Letter Councils plan to allocate at least \$1,000 per academic year to demonstrate the undergraduate Greek community's support for the organization.

Additionally, Cayuga's Watchers is exploring ways in which to further its educational and public safety goals. Cayuga's Watchers is actively **collaborating with Gannett Health Services to create a training package specifically tailored to the athletic program's alcohol awareness training.**

Finally, **Cayuga's Watchers is excited to announce that it is launching an advisory council** comprised of interested alumni whose expertise, professional experience, and vision will help grow the organization. The advisory council will

⁴ The "ABCDs" refers to a simple mnemonic device that we teach our employees that aids them in recognizing the signs of alcohol poisoning in another. "A" stands for Alert; "B" stands for breathing; "C" stands for color; and "D" stands for doubt.

address three areas of critical need: strategic planning, operations and national expansion.

Cayuga's Watchers is excited to embark on another successful campaign. The organization appreciates the broad support it has received from students, administrators, parents, and alumni alike, and looks forward to working with interested stakeholders in making Cornell a safer campus.