

Cinco de Mayo

University of Cincinnati  
Student Survey

Dr. Bonnie S. Fisher  
Dr. John E. Eck  
Tamara D. Madensen

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## **Cinco De Mayo Student Survey**

Undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Cincinnati were asked to complete a survey sent to them via e-mail concerning their past participation, awareness, and perceptions of the past Cinco de Mayo parties held on Stratford Street. This project was undertaken as part of an effort to develop long-term prevention strategies to address off-campus student disturbances that have occurred twice (2002, 2003) in celebration of Cinco de Mayo. Students were selected to participate in this survey based on a number of demographic and enrollment characteristics. These characteristics and the survey methodology used will be discussed in the following section.

Following the description of sample criteria and survey methodology, this report will present the findings from the U.C. student survey in three major sections. The first section will describe who is likely to attend the 2004 Cinco de Mayo party. The second section will outline the unfolding of events at prior Cinco de Mayo parties. Student behaviors will be examined using a framework created by extending the work of Clark McPhail (1991), an expert in crowd behavior. The third and final section will include a summary of student perceptions of the parties, their perceptions of accountability for past disturbances, and conclude with their perceptions of the effectiveness of suggested interventions.

## **Survey Method and Sample**

The following is a list of criteria used for selecting student participants:

- Currently enrolled in Winter term 2004 on West Campus
- Undergraduate status

- Between 18 and 26 years old
- Full- or part-time student
- Had an e-mail address that had been verified within the last 90 days

There were 11,968 students who met the above criteria as of March 1, 2004. An e-mail explaining the purpose of the survey and a link to the website housing the survey was sent to these students on March 10, 2004. The students were assured that the survey was anonymous. All identifying information was stripped from the survey when the student submitted his or her responses. Students were able to submit their responses until March 30, 2004. A total of 1,787 surveys were completed and submitted<sup>1</sup>.

The survey results cannot be generalized to the entire sample due to the relatively low response rate (14.93%). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the findings are representative of the University's undergraduate population. However, the results indicate that a large percentage of those who attended at least one Cinco de Mayo party in the past submitted a completed survey. These students' responses have been analyzed to provide a descriptive account of past events.

## **Who Will Be There?**

Students were asked whether they plan to attend the 2004 Cinco de Mayo party using a four-item response category: (1) I most definitely would go, (2) I probably would go, (3) I probably would not go, (4) I most definitely would not go. For descriptive purposes, the first two categories and the last two categories were combined to allow a comparison of those who are most likely to attend and those who are least likely to attend. This dichotomous (Will go,

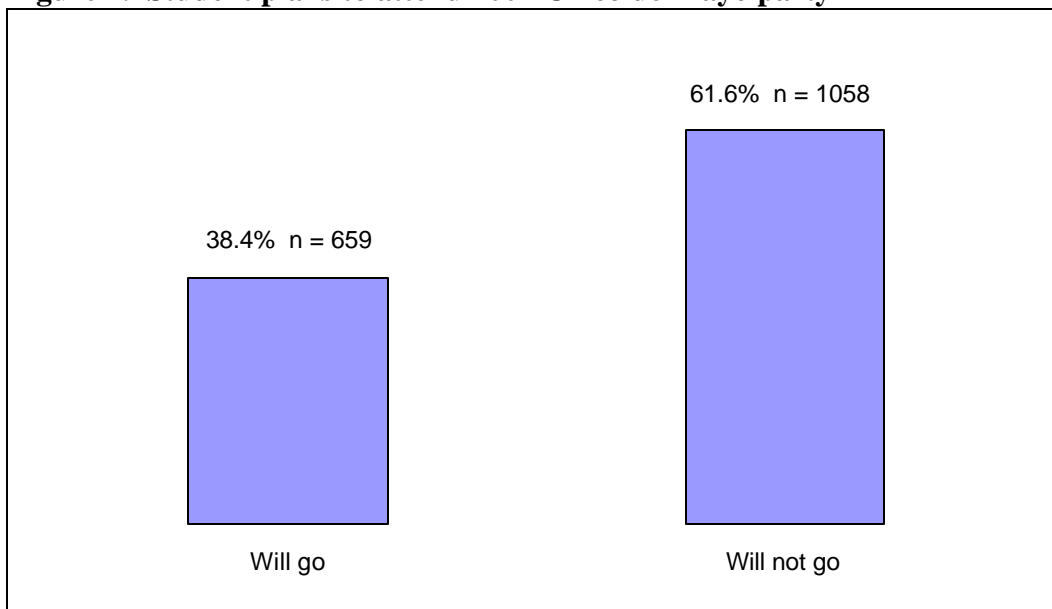
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<sup>1</sup> A total response rate cannot be calculated at this time due to a technical error in the creation of the Cinco Survey account. Administrators in the UCITS office are working to remedy this issue.

Will not go) variable will be used throughout this report to describe the plans, demographics, attitudes, and behaviors of students based on their likelihood of future participation in Cinco de Mayo activities.

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of both the percentage and number of students planning to attend the 2004 Cinco de Mayo party. While the majority of students indicate they probably will not attend the party, a substantial number indicate they do plan to attend the party on Stratford (n = 659). Based on sampling procedures and the overall response rate of the survey, it is likely that the actual number of students planning to attend this year's event is even greater than the survey estimate.

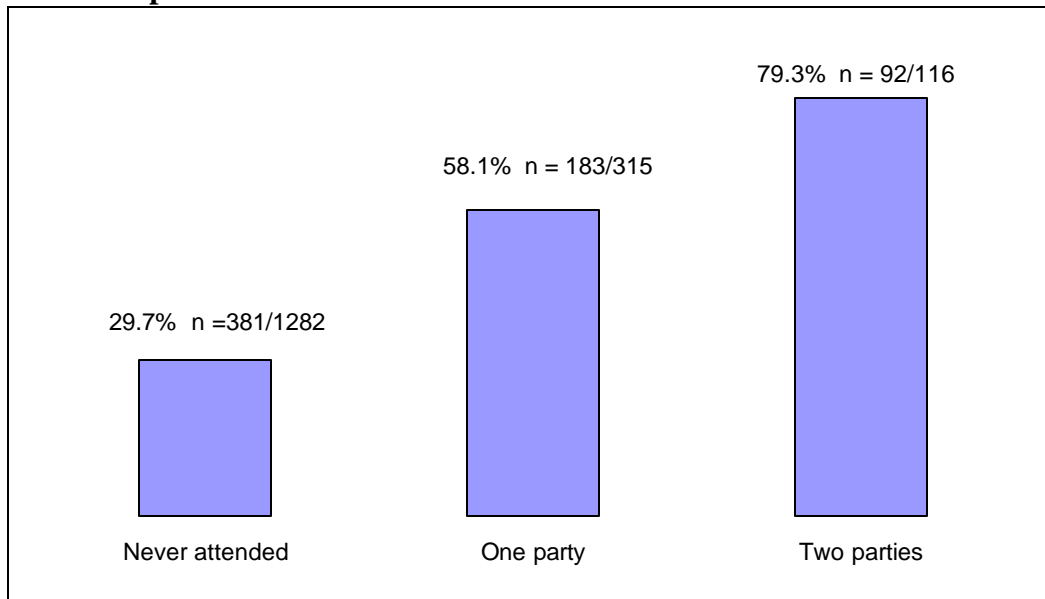
**Figure 1. Student plans to attend 2004 Cinco de Mayo party**



The data indicate that the best predictor of attendance at the 2004 party is prior attendance at the Cinco de Mayo parties. Figure 2 illustrates that 79.3 percent of students who attended both the 2002 and 2003 Cinco de Mayo parties on Stratford are planning to attend again this year. For those who attended at least one of the two previous events, 58.1 percent say they plan to attend again. Students who have not attended in the past are the least likely to attend,

with 29.7 percent planning to be present at the 2004 event. However, the raw numbers reveal that the largest proportion of students planning to attend have not previously attended the Stratford event (n = 381). This figure indicates that the number of people planning to attend these parties may be growing and the 2004 event could be the largest Cinco de Mayo party on Stratford to date.

**Figure 2. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on number of past Cinco de Mayo parties attended**

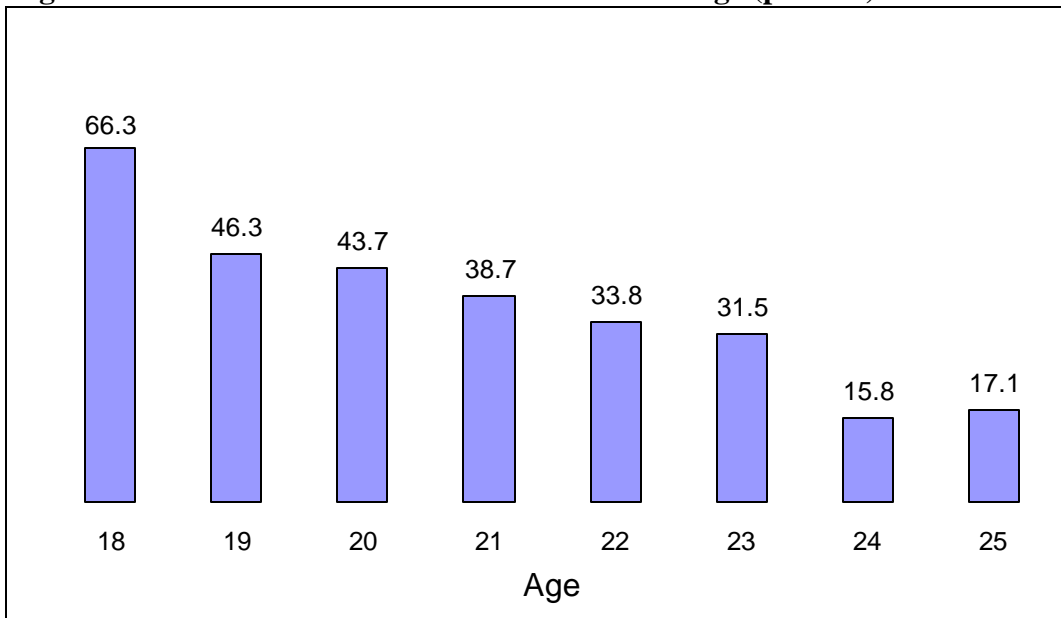


Younger students are more likely to say they plan to attend, especially those students who are under 21 years of age. Figure 3 reveals a relatively consistent trend with the largest percentage of students likely to attend being 18, with the percentage falling for 19 year olds, again for 20 year olds, and so on. The only exception is a slight increase in likelihood of attendance between the 24 and 25 age categories, although these individuals are the least likely to attend. The influence of other student demographics on the likelihood to attend are illustrated in the figures presented in Appendix A.

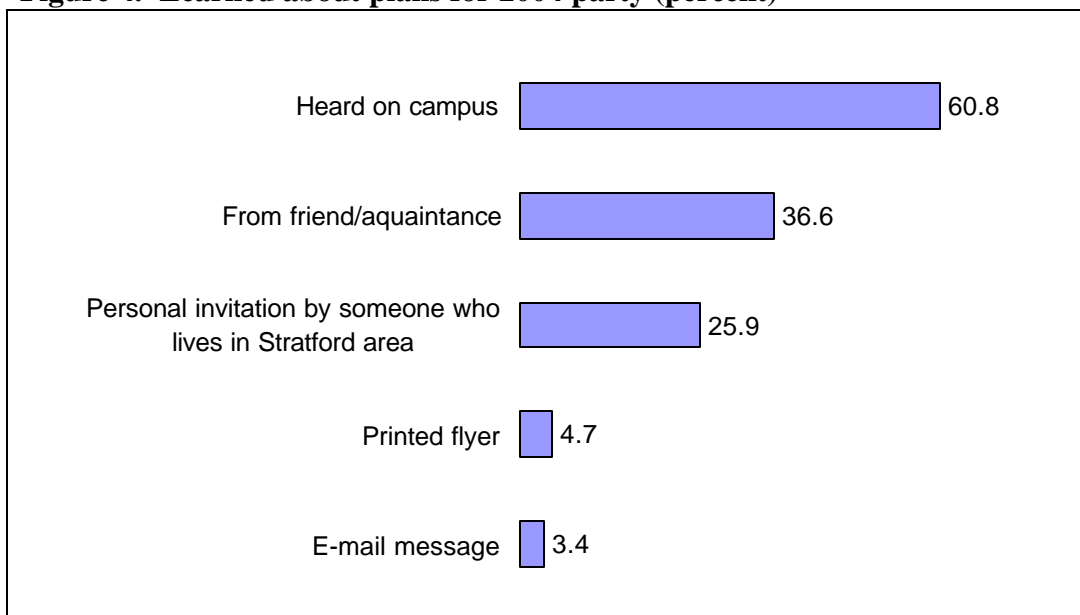
The students were also asked how they became aware of plans for a 2004 Cinco de Mayo party on Stratford. A breakdown of the various methods of communication used by students is

provided in Figure 4. Most students have heard of plans for a 2004 party either on campus, from a friend or acquaintance, or by a personal invitation. Very few said they have been made aware of the party through posted flyers or e-mail messages. Overall, word of mouth seems to be the most widely used method of communicating plans for the 2004 event.

**Figure 3. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on age (percent)**



**Figure 4. Learned about plans for 2004 party (percent)**





## What Are Students Going To Do At the Party?

Clark McPhail (1991), a sociologist and leading expert in crowd behavior, has suggested that crowds should not be viewed as a single entity, nor should they be viewed as an event concentrated at a single point in time and space. There tend to be many subgroups and individuals within a crowd with differing agendas. The number these individuals and size of these subgroups tend to increase as the overall size of the crowd increases. Additionally, a crowd should be seen as the culmination and then dissipation of a typically lengthy process made up of at least five identifiable stages.

The data collected in the student survey clearly support the idea of differing agendas and the view of the crowd as a process. The model presented in Table 1 was developed as an extension of McPhail's work to help identify particular phases of crowd planning, formation, and dispersal for the purpose of implementing prevention strategies. This model provides a framework for understanding how the annual Cinco de Mayo event unfolds. A brief description of the type of activities that occur within each of the five stages is provided under each major heading in Table 1. The findings of the student survey will be presented within each of these stages below.

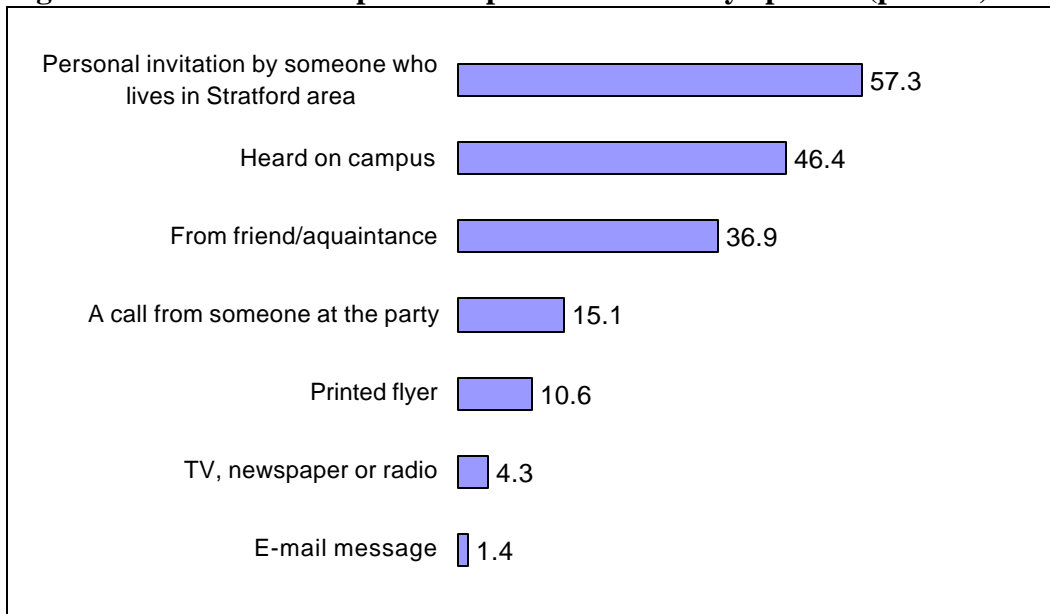
**Table 1. Model of Crowd Formation and Behavior**

<b>Planning Stage</b>	<b>Pre-assembly Preparation</b>	<b>Assembling Process</b>	<b>Assembled Gathering</b>	<b>Dispersal Process</b>
Students plan party, put up/send out invitations, word-of-mouth	Kegs and other party supplies bought, location is readied	Students find transportation, movement toward the location	The event and all activities that occur on-site after students arrive	Students leave, movement away from the location

## Planning Stage

The planning stage of the crowd process includes early preparation and scheduling of the anticipated event. The most notable development that occurs in the planning stage is the invitation process. Students were asked how they learned about plans for past Cinco de Mayo parties (see Figure 5). The results closely resemble the findings presented previously concerning the 2004 party. Students in past years and for the 2004 party rely heavily on word of mouth to circulate information concerning the time, date, and location of the Cinco de Mayo event. Very few students report having heard of the event through printed materials.

**Figure 5. Learned about plans for past Cinco de Mayo parties (percent)**



## Pre-assembly Preparation

The Cinco de Mayo survey was developed to collect relatively general information concerning past party participation. To keep the survey at a reasonable length, very specific planning questions were avoided since these would apply to a very small fraction of the students surveyed. Consequently, the survey results do not describe all of the activities that may have occurred during pre-assembly preparations.

The survey provides information on why students made the decision to attend. This decision represents one of the processes that occur during the “pre-assembly preparation” stage. Students were asked to identify all of the factors that influenced their past decision to attend. The factors that most strongly influenced students’ decisions are shown in Figure 6. The data indicate that students generally attend because their friends are going, it is close by, they want to experience the party, and alcohol will be available.

**Figure 6. Why students decided to attend – Most important factors (percent)**

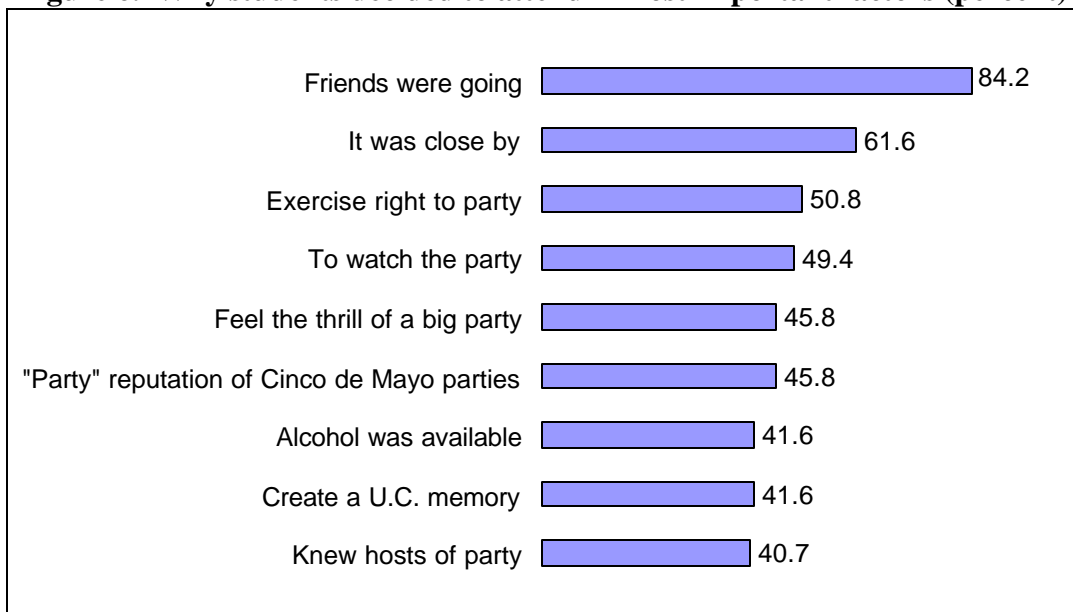
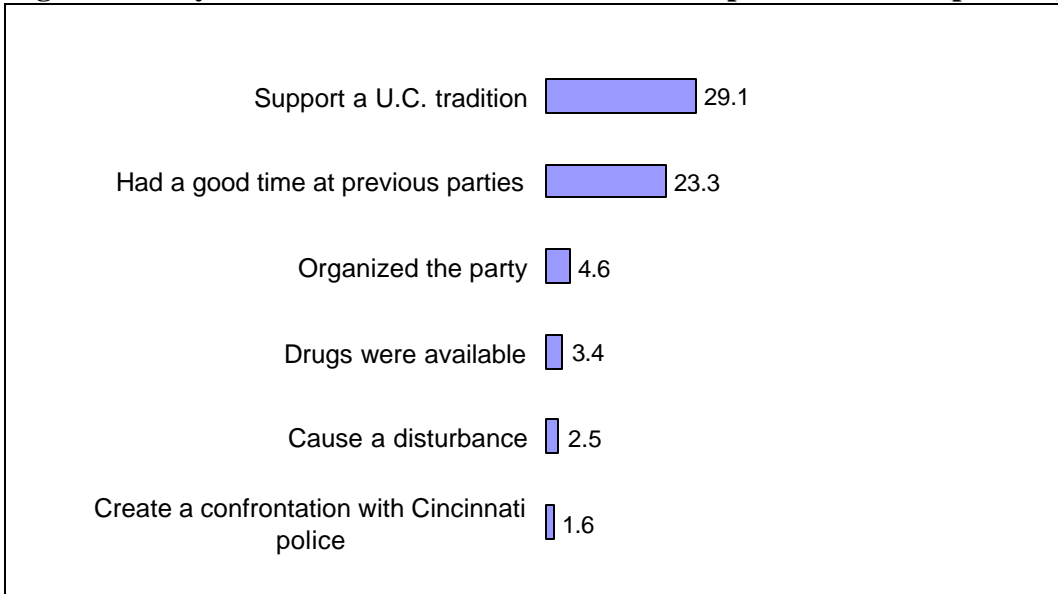


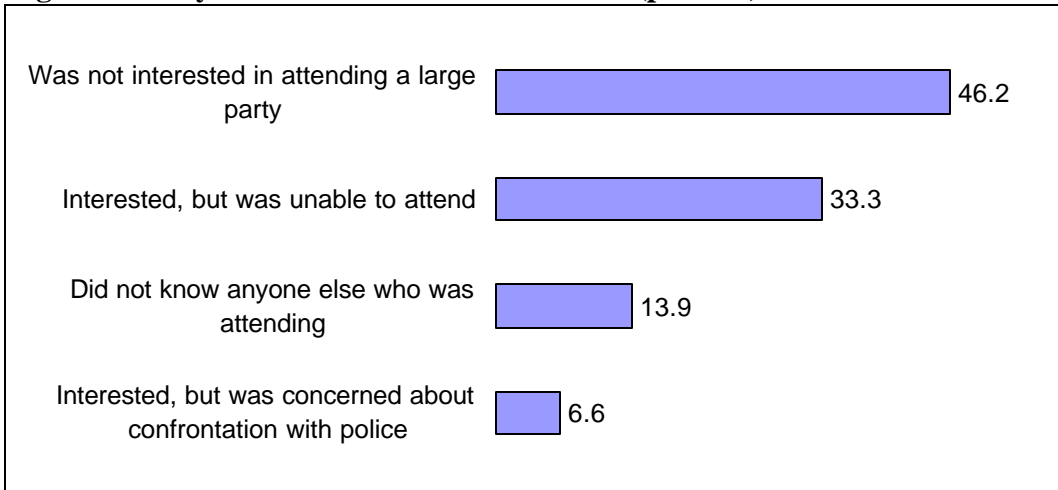
Figure 7 lists the factors that were least significant in their decision process. Three major findings are illustrated in this graph. First, very few students report direct involvement in organizing the past events. Second, while alcohol availability seems to have encouraged past attendance, the findings suggest that drugs play a very small role in promoting attendance. Third, a very small number of students who responded indicate that they went to the party because they wanted to cause a disturbance or confront the Cincinnati police.

**Figure 7. Why students decided to attend – Least important factors (percent)**



Those who were not present at either of the past Cinco de Mayo parties were asked why they decided not to attend (see Figure 8). Most of the students said were not interested in attending a large party. However, it is interesting to note that 33.3 percent of the students were interested in attending, but were unable to do so. This seems to suggest that significantly more students wanted to attend than were actually present at past parties.

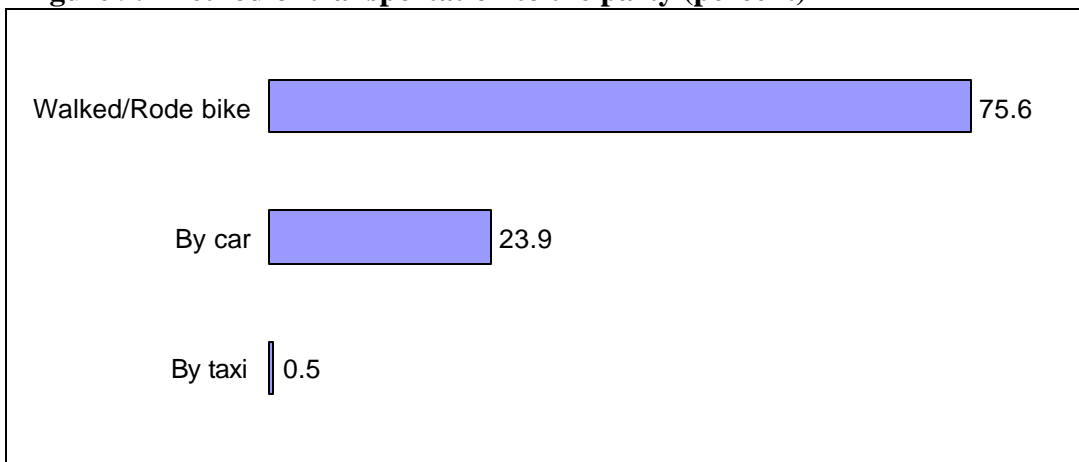
**Figure 8. Why students decided not to attend (percent)**



## Assembling Process

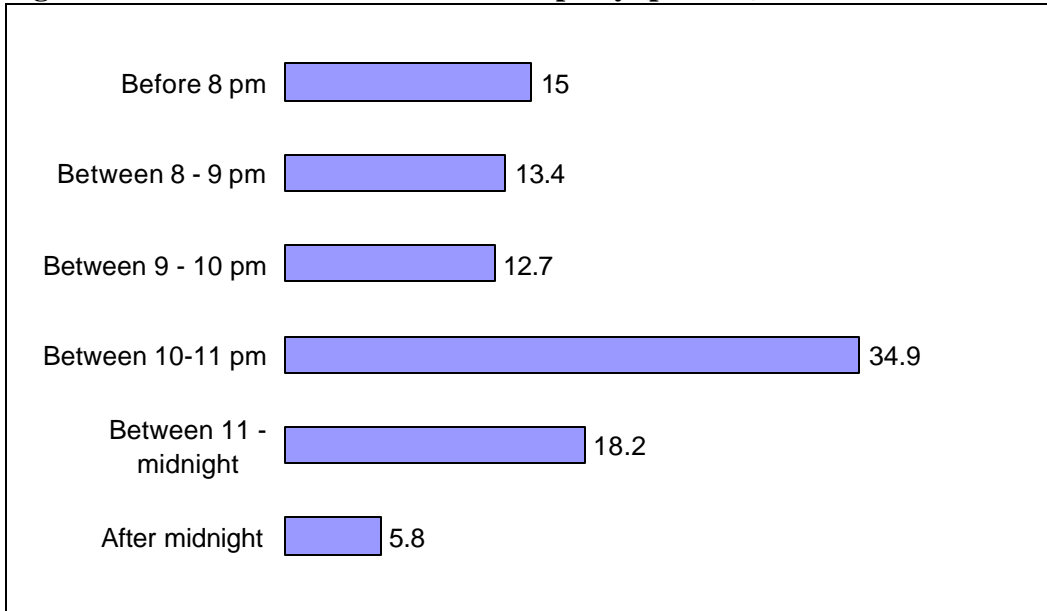
The stage just prior to the actual event is the assembling process. This process is characterized by movement toward the location of the event. To help understand the assembling process of the Cinco de Mayo parties, students were asked questions concerning their method of transportation to the party and the time they arrived at the event. The results of these survey questions are shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10.

**Figure 9. Method of transportation to the party (percent)**



Approximately one quarter of the students arrived at the party by car. Nevertheless, more than 75 percent of those that attended in the past either walked or rode a bike to the event. This finding suggests that most students who have attended these parties are coming from nearby residences. Over half (53.1%) of the students arrived at the party between 10:00 pm and midnight, with the largest percentage of students arriving between 10:00 pm and 11:00 pm (34.9%).

**Figure 10. Time students arrived at the party (percent)**

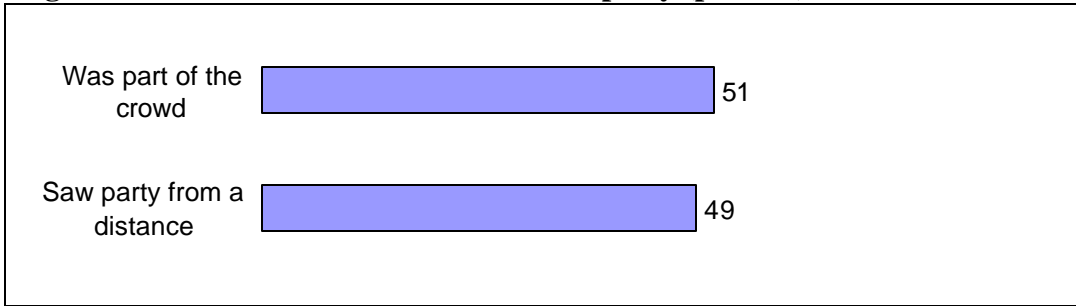


### **Assembled Gathering**

The majority of survey questions concerning past Cinco de Mayo parties attempted to collect information about students' experiences at the assembled gatherings. Students were asked a series of questions related to their personal involvement and reactions, as well as their drug and alcohol consumption. Students were also asked to identify factors that may have contributed to the disturbance.

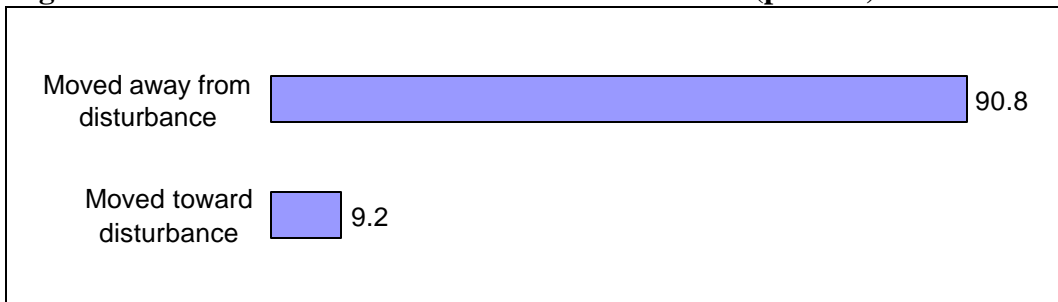
Of those who attended either of the Cinco de Mayo parties on Stratford Street, only half report being part of the crowd (see Figure 11). The other half of attendees said they stood away from the crowd and watched the party from a distance. This further supports the previous findings that suggests there tend to be subgroups within the crowd made up of individuals with differing agendas.

**Figure 11. Overall student involvement in party (percent)**

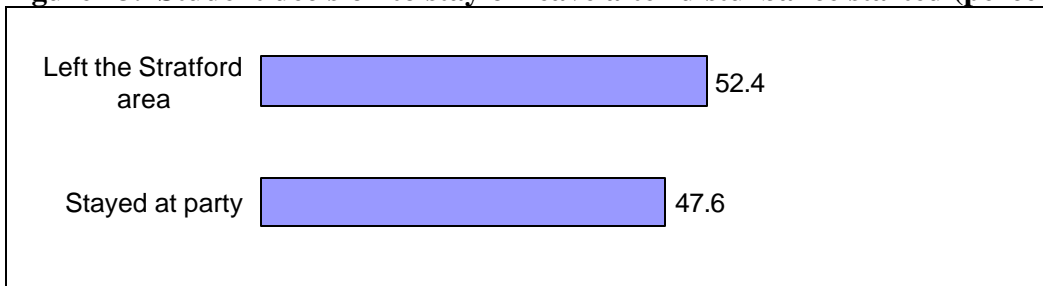


Once the disturbance started, most students report having moved away from the disruption in the crowd (see Figure 12). Only 9.2 percent of attendees said they moved toward the center of the crowd after the disturbance began. While the majority of students backed away, almost half (47.6%) of the students remained at the party despite the disruption and subsequent violence (see Figure 13).

**Figure 12. Student reaction when disturbance started (percent)**



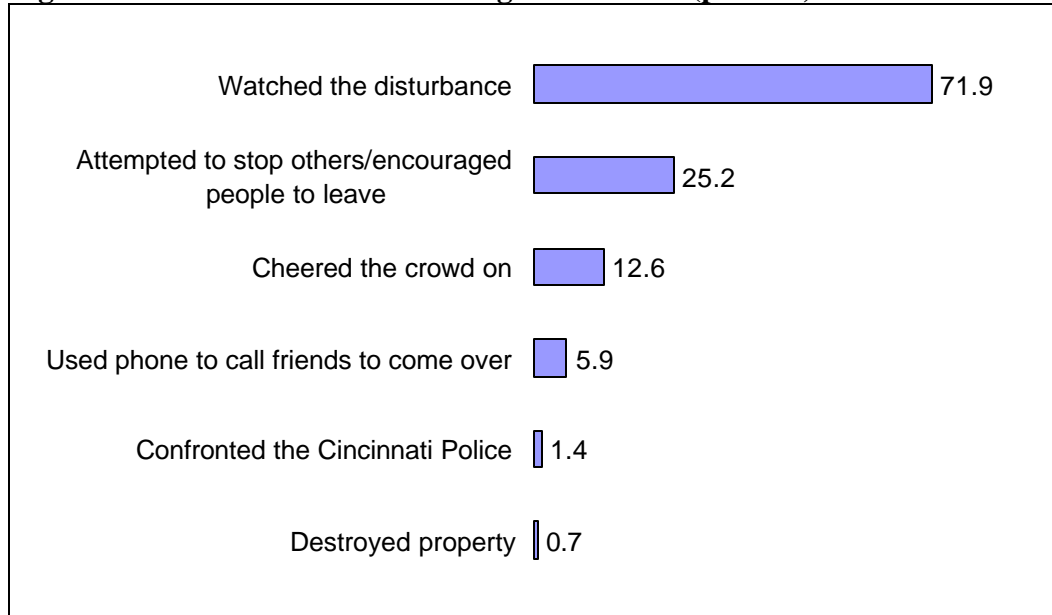
**Figure 13. Student decision to stay or leave after disturbance started (percent)**



Of the students who stayed at the party once the disturbance started, most (71.9%) said they watched the disturbance. About one quarter (25.2%) of the remaining students reported attempting to stop others from misbehaving or encouraging people to leave. Only 12.6 percent

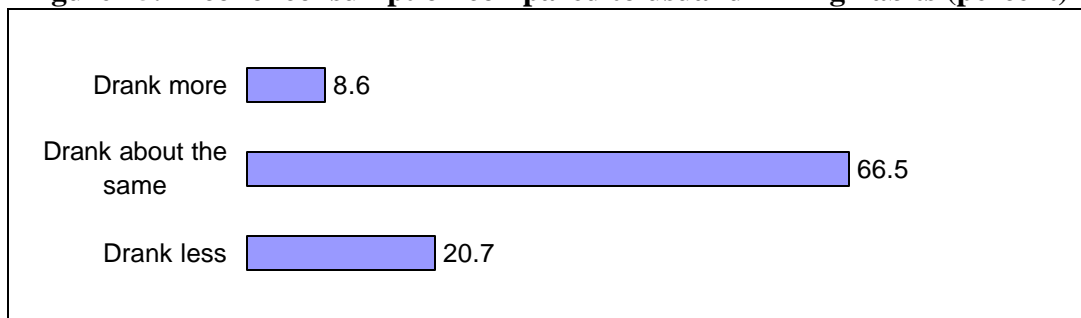
of students participated indirectly by cheering the crowd on. Very few students in the sample admitted to confronting the police or destroying property (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Student behaviors during disturbance (percent)**



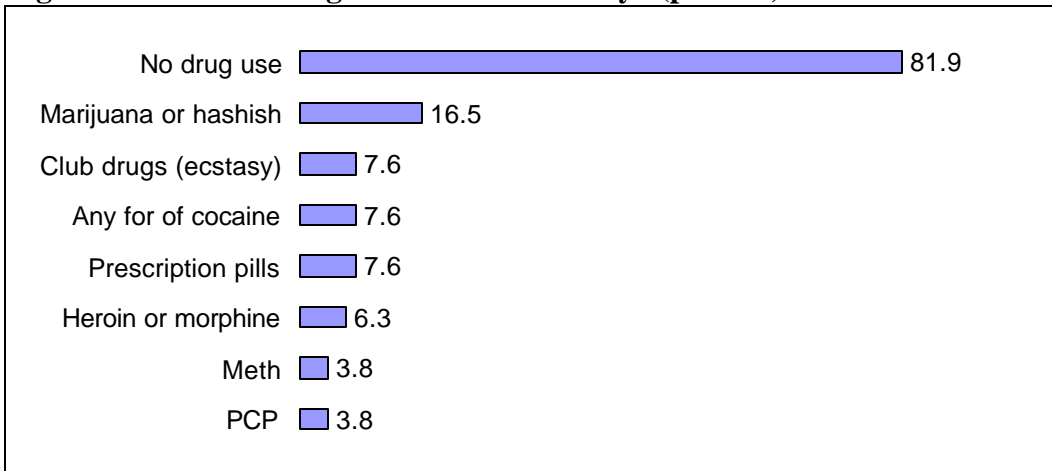
Students were asked about their drug and alcohol use during the Cinco de Mayo parties. Although students indicated that alcohol availability was one of the most important reasons for attending the event, slightly more than two-thirds of the students (66.5%) said they drank about as much as they usually do (see Figure 15). Only 8.6 percent of attendees said they drank more than usual on the night of the party. Very few students report having engaged in drug use. Almost 82 percent of students said they did not take drugs at or directly prior to the event (see Figure 16).

**Figure 15. Alcohol consumption compared to usual drinking habits (percent)**



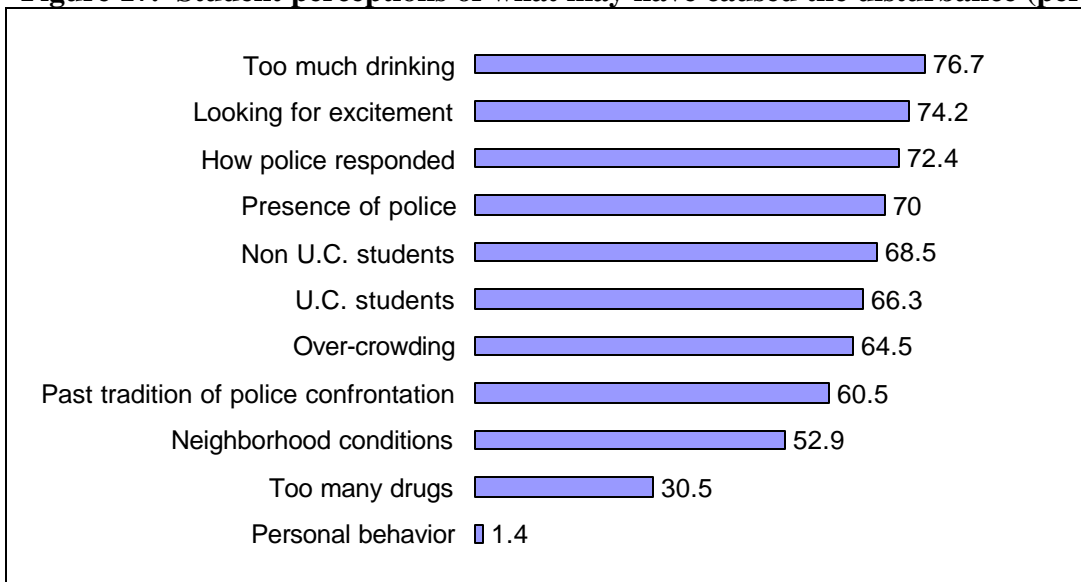


**Figure 16. Student drug use on Cinco de Mayo (percent)**



Students were asked to consider a list of factors that may have contributed to the Cinco de Mayo disturbances. Of the 11 factors listed, over half of the students believed nine of the potential causes significantly contributed to student misconduct (see Figure 17). Overall, students thought that too much drinking, boredom, police presence/reaction/tradition, both U.C. and non-U.C. students, and neighborhood conditions were each at least partially responsible for triggering student violence. Students did not feel that drugs played as large a role as alcohol, nor did their personal behaviors.

**Figure 17. Student perceptions of what may have caused the disturbance (percent)**



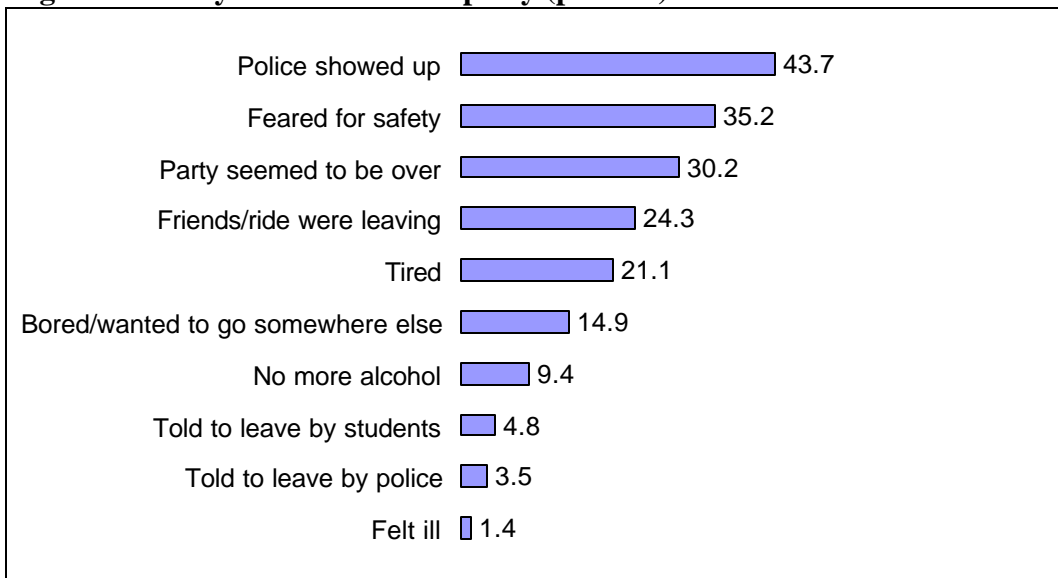
## Dispersal Process

The dispersal process is characterized by individual decisions to leave and the resulting movement away from the event location. As such, three issues are important in understanding how the dispersal stage unfolds: (1) why students left, (2) the time students left, and (3) how the students returned home or left for some other location.

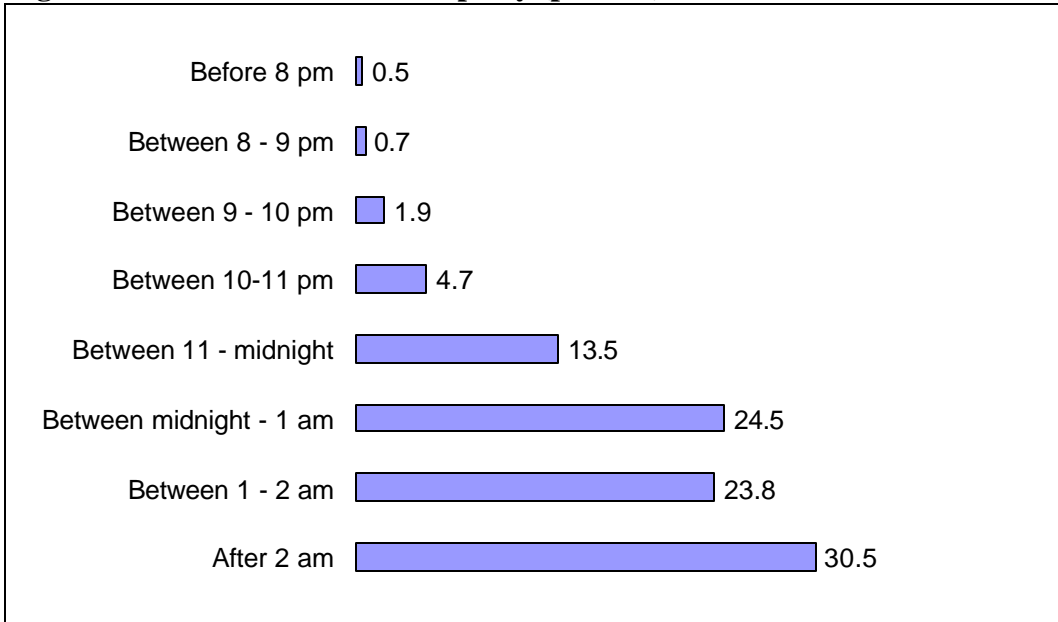
Students indicated a wide variety of reasons for leaving past Cinco de Mayo parties (see Figure 18). The two most important reasons for leaving were that the police showed up and people feared for their personal safety or for the safety of those around them. However, students also said they left because they were tired, their friends were leaving, or because they were bored. These responses suggest that student misconduct is not the only reason for dispersal.

Figure 19 reports the time students left the parties. The graph clearly shows that most students left the party after midnight. The largest percentage of students left after 2:00 am (30.5%). This data corresponds with reports that the disturbances usually start sometime around midnight, as well as the survey findings that suggest students begin to leave once others begin to engage in violent activities.

**Figure 19. Why students left the party (percent)**

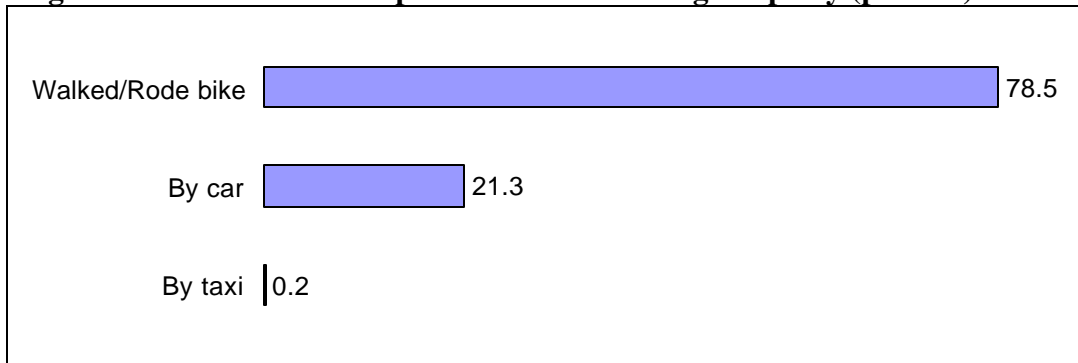


**Figure 18. Time students left the party (percent)**



The methods of transportation away from the party location mirror the method of arrival (see Figure 20). Once again, the majority of students reported walking or riding a bike when leaving. Only a couple of students reported using a taxi service for transportation.

**Figure 20. Method of transportation when leaving the party (percent)**



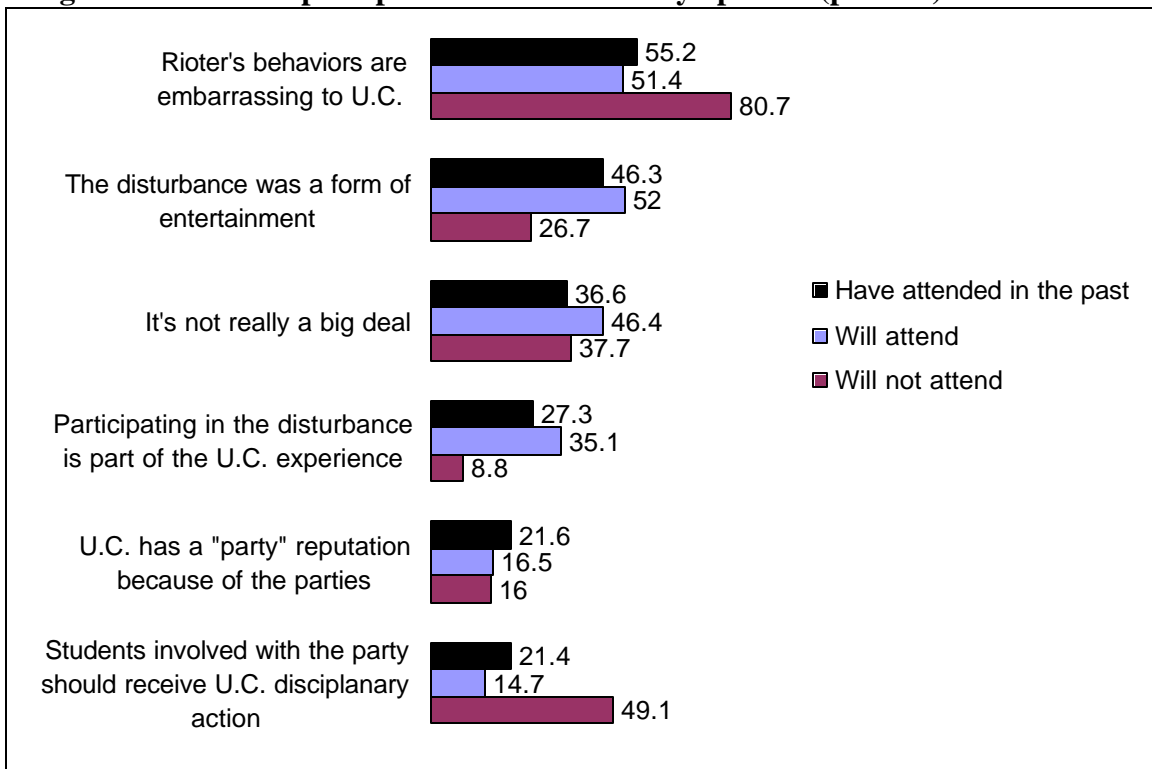
## What Might Prevent Another Disturbance?

The last section of the student survey provides data that may prove useful in developing future long-term prevention strategies. The data obtained provides information concerning student perceptions of past parties, accountability, and the effectiveness of proposed strategies. Student responses were grouped into three categories based on student experience and future plans: (1) students who have attended at least one party in the past, (2) students who plan to attend the 2004 party, and (3) students who do not plan to attend the 2004 party. The following graphs will present the findings based on this categorization.

All of the students who said they were aware of the past parties were asked a series of questions related to their perceptions of the Cinco de Mayo events. The first question asked students whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with a list of six general statements about the event (see Figure 21). For ease of interpretation, the responses were collapsed into dichotomous variables that reveal whether the students generally agree or disagree with the statements.

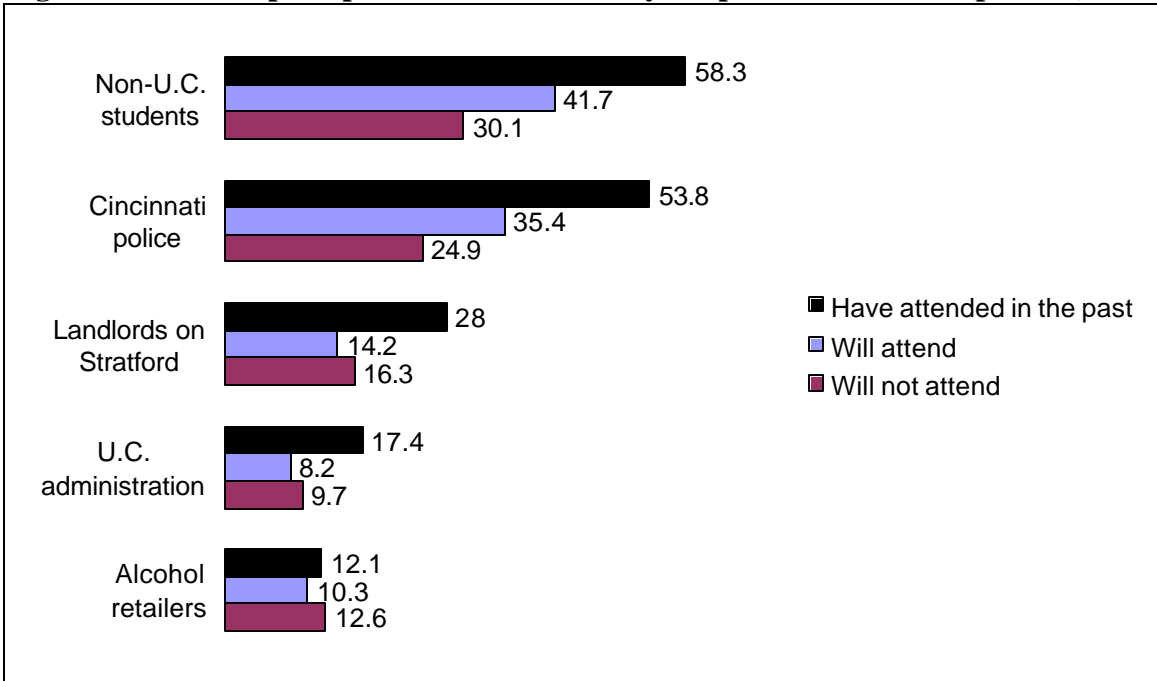
The data indicate that there are significant differences in perceptions based on the three student categories described above. Specifically, students who did not plan to attend are more likely to believe that rioter's behaviors are embarrassing to U.C. and that students involved with the party should receive university discipline than are students who have attended or plan to attend a Cinco de Mayo event. On the other hand, those who have attended or plan to attend were more likely to agree that participating in the disturbance is part of the U.C. experience and that the disturbance was a form of entertainment. While there are marked differences between the student groups, the majority of students in each group believed that rioter's behaviors are embarrassing to U.C.

**Figure 21. Student perceptions of Cinco de Mayo parties (percent)**



There was consensus across the student categories concerning their choice of the three groups they felt were most accountable for past disturbances (see Figure 22). The students generally felt that non-U.C. students were most responsible for past disturbances. The students further reported that the Cincinnati police were seen as the second most accountable, followed by the landlords on Stratford. The student responses also indicate that U.C. administration and alcohol retailers were seen as least responsible for student misconduct.

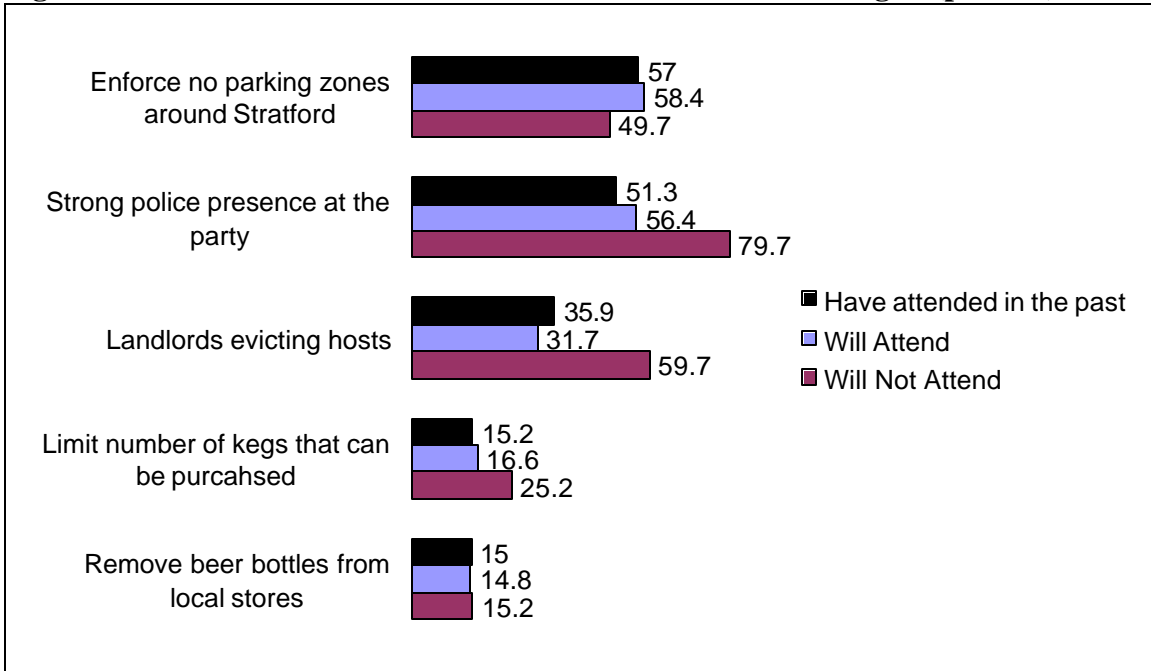
**Figure 22. Student perceptions of accountability for past disturbances (percent)**



In an effort to inform future prevention strategies, the survey asked students to rate the effectiveness of several possible interventions. For presentation, the interventions have been divided into five general categories: (1) outside enforcement strategies, (2) rule creation and enforcement, (3) publicity and information campaigns, (4) personal interventions, and (5) providing party alternatives. The results are illustrated in Figure 23 through Figure 27.

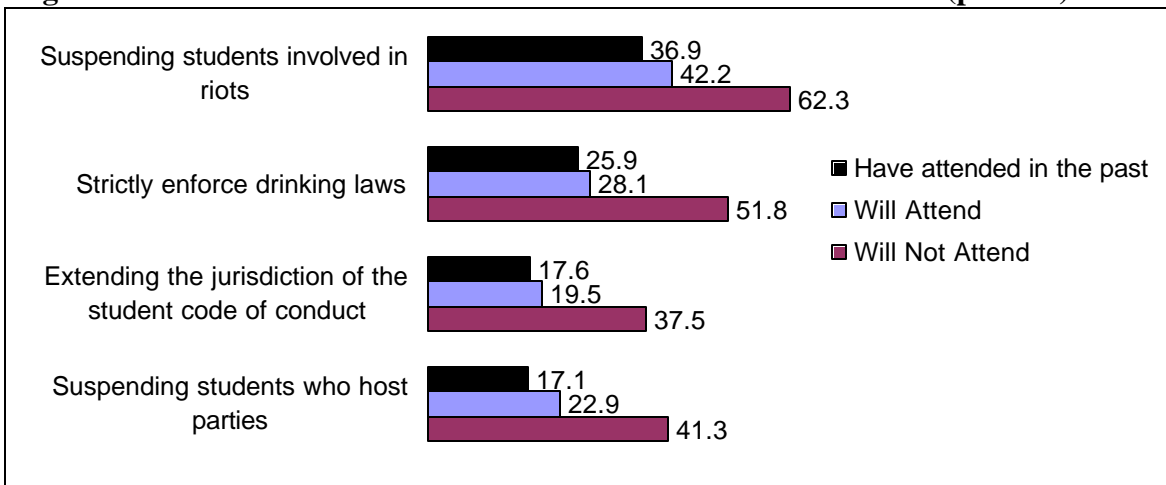
Concerning outside enforcement strategies (see Figure 23), students who do not plan to attend the 2004 party were more likely to favor punitive responses such as landlords evicting party hosts and strong police presence. None of the groups showed much support for attempts to limit or place conditions on alcohol sales. Interestingly, the majority of students who have attended and will attend thought that the enforcement of no parking zones around the Stratford area would help to reduce the likelihood of a disturbance the most. Almost half of the students who do not plan to attend also thought this strategy would be effective.

**Figure 23. Perceived effectiveness of outside enforcement strategies (percent)**



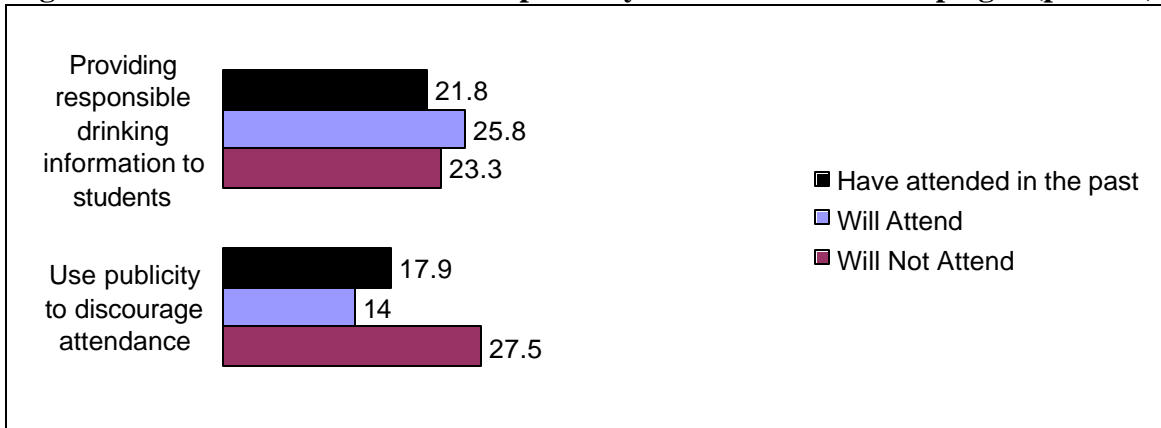
Again, students who do not plan to attend the 2004 event were more likely to believe that punitive rule creation and enforcement would be effective than the other two student groups. This viewpoint is demonstrated within every category in Figure 24. Students who attended in the past or plan to attend did not report as much confidence in these types of strategies. However, out of the four rule creation and enforcement interventions suggested, suspending students involved in the riots garnered the most support from all three groups of students.

**Figure 24. Perceived effectiveness of rule creation and enforcement (percent)**



The use of publicity and information campaigns was perceived as the least effective type of intervention strategy overall (see Figure 25). Generally, a relatively small percentage of students believed that providing students with information concerning how to drink responsibly would help to prevent a future disturbance. Similarly, most students did not believe that publicity campaigns to discourage attendance would be effective.

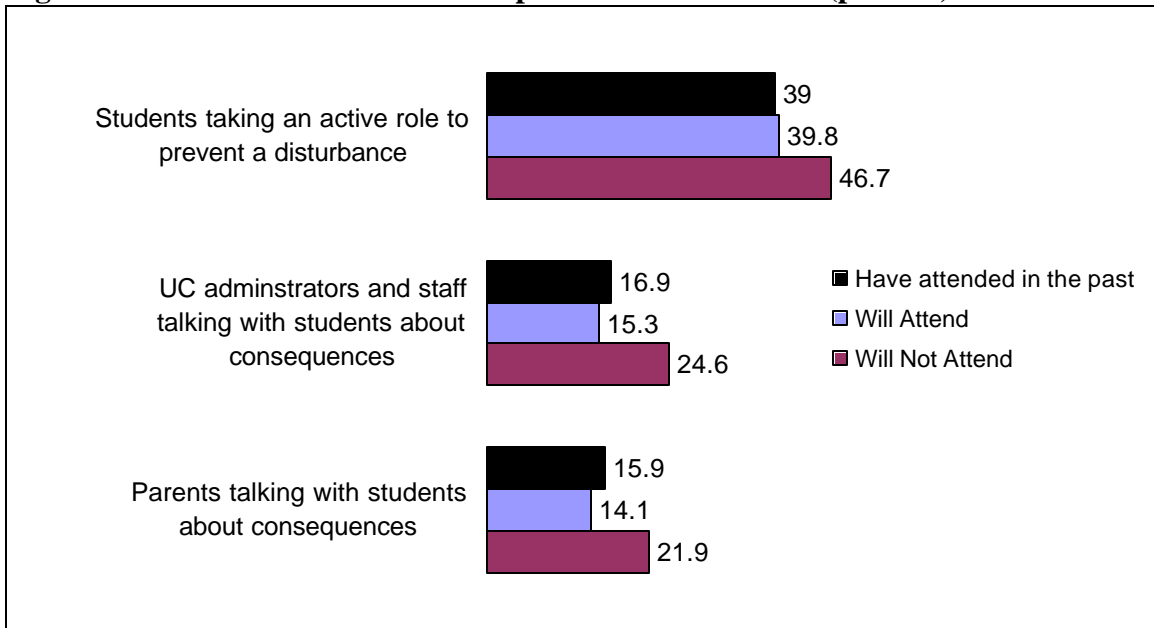
**Figure 25. Perceived effectiveness of publicity and information campaigns (percent)**



Much like the publicity and information strategies presented above, most students did not feel that the personal interventions suggested would have much impact on student behavior (see Figure 26). Most notably, students generally felt that parents talking with their children about the consequences of participation would be the least effective, although they report U.C. administration and staff might have slightly greater influence. All three student groups did agree, however, that peer intervention would have the greatest impact on student behavior out of all of the personal interventions suggested. Almost 40 percent of students who have attended or plan to attend felt some type of student intervention could help prevent another disturbance.

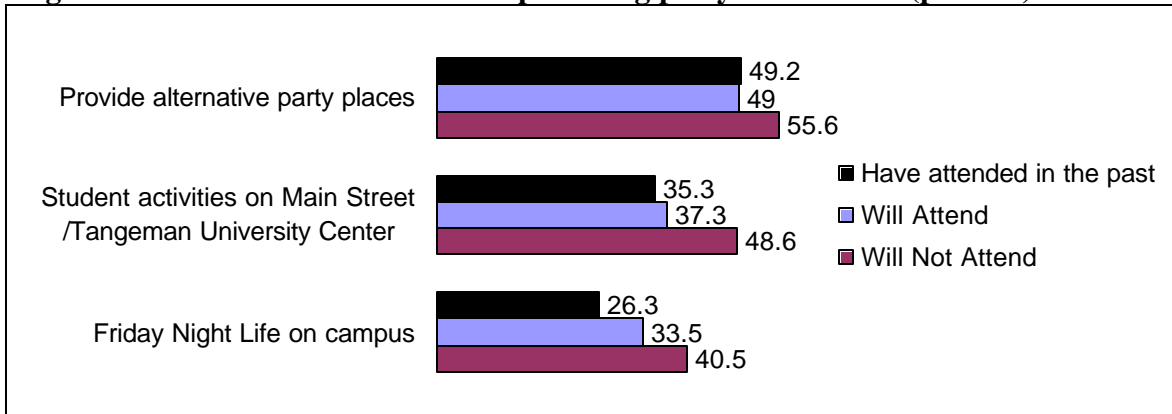


**Figure 26. Perceived effectiveness of personal interventions (percent)**



Many students indicated that providing alternative party places would help to prevent another disturbance (see Figure 27). About half of all student groups thought this strategy would be effective. Additional, more specific alternatives to the Cinco de Mayo event were also suggested. These alternatives included student activities on Main Street/Tangeman University Center and Friday Nigh Life on campus. While students reported these activities might not be effective as alternative party places, at least a fourth of each group thought these activities would be effective.

**Figure 27. Perceived effectiveness of providing party alternatives (percent)**

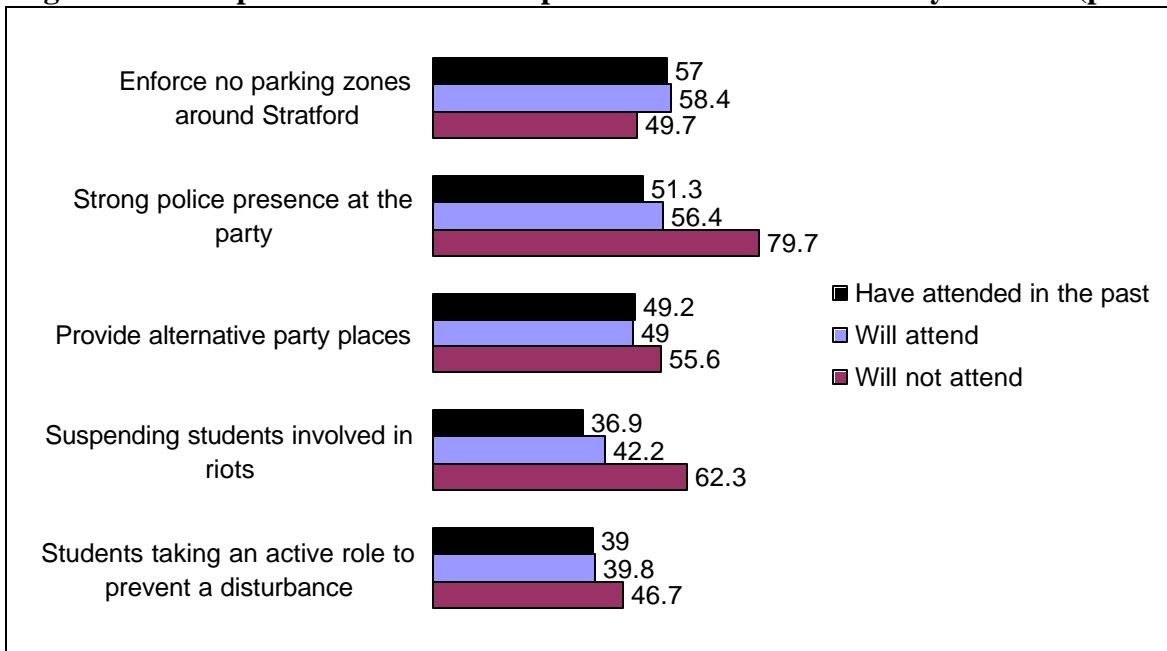


To help summarize the above findings, Figure 28 presents the five interventions perceived by students as the most effective strategies. Since it could be argued that students who have attended Cinco de Mayo events in the past have the most insight into what might deter partygoers from engaging in destructive activities, the interventions are ordered from most to least effective based on this group's perceptions. Those who will attend the 2004 party also provided responses that indicate agreement with this ranking of interventions; however, those who do not plan to attend did not.

According to the students who participated in the survey, the most promising interventions, based on the order of their perceived effectiveness are as follows:

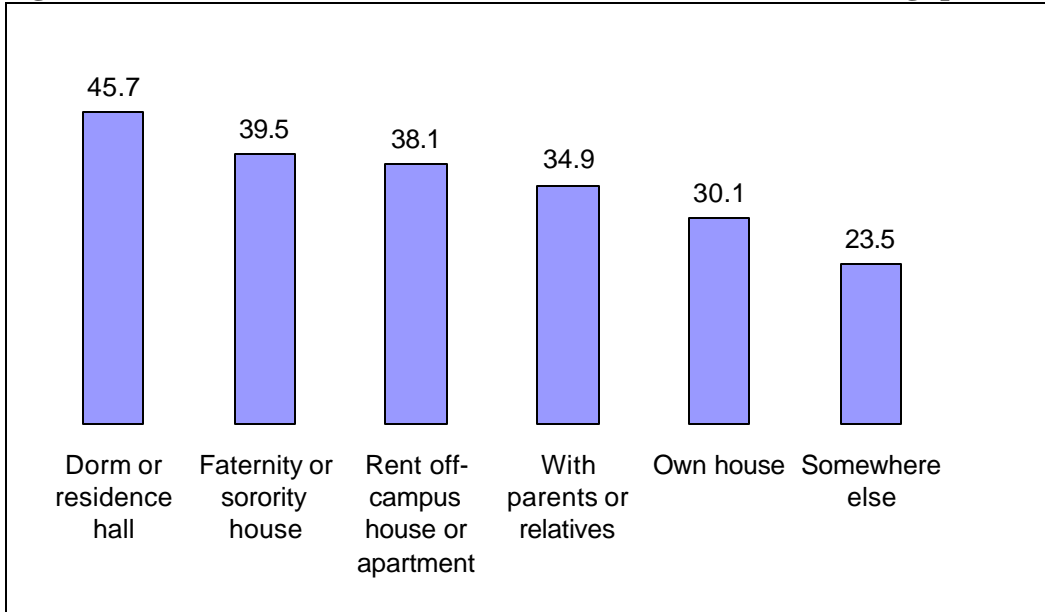
1. Enforcement of no parking zones around Stratford
2. Having a strong police presence at the party
3. Providing alternative places to party
4. Suspending students involved in the riots
5. Having students take an active role to prevent a disturbance

**Figure 28. Five possible interventions perceived as most effective by students (percent)**

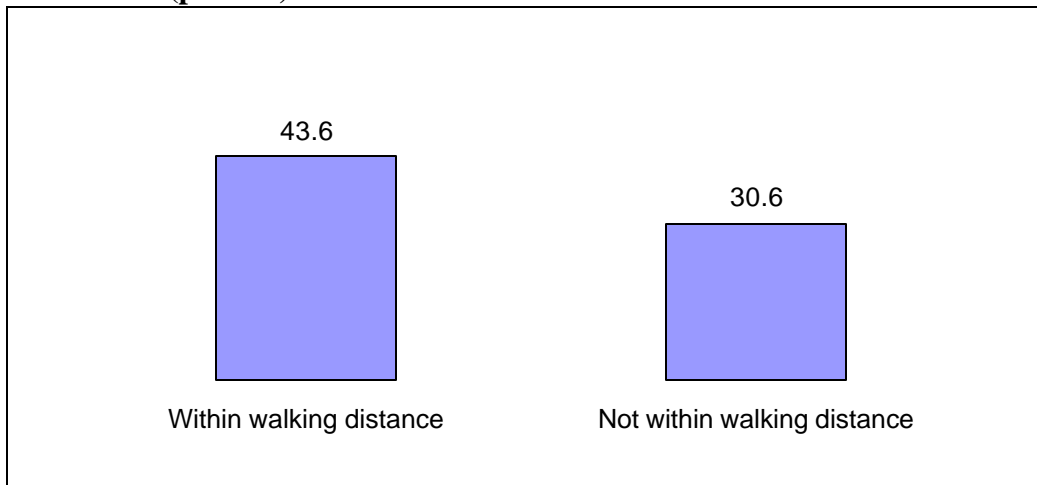


## Appendix A

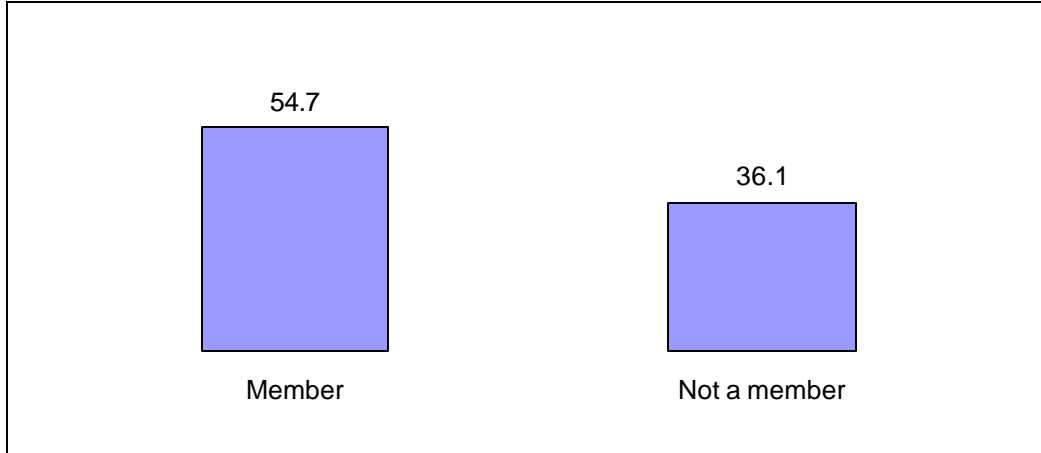
**Figure 29. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on current housing (percent)**



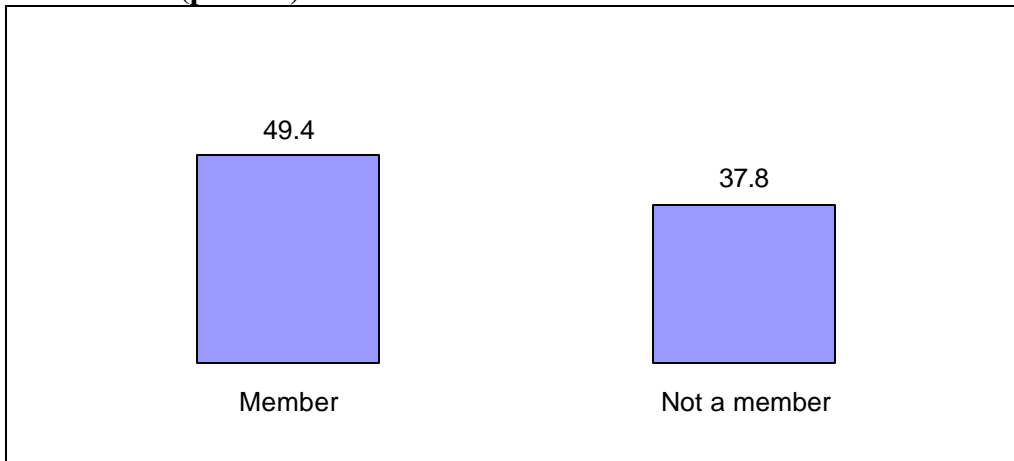
**Figure 30. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on distance of residence from U.C. (percent)**



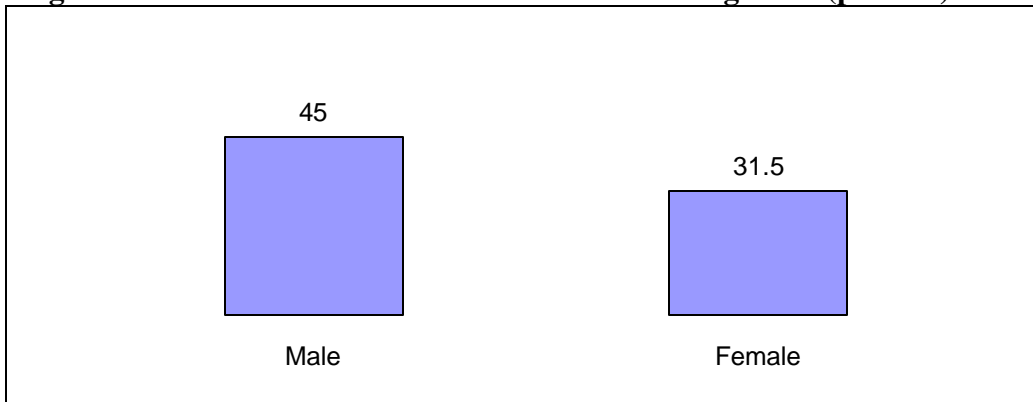
**Figure 31. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on fraternity/sorority membership (percent)**



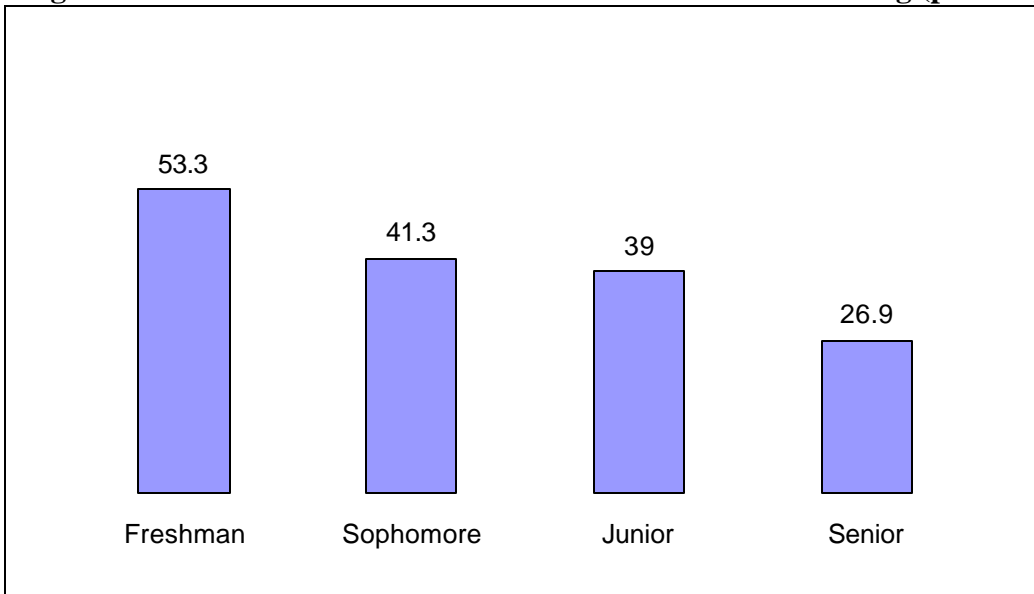
**Figure 32. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on sports team membership (percent)**



**Figure 33. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on gender (percent)**



**Figure 34. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on class standing (percent)**



**Figure 35. Likelihood of 2004 attendance based on race**

