



National Conference for Hidden Student Populations

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<https://nchp.okstate.edu>

Current Hidden College Student Populations

May include those who have foster care histories, justice-involved experiences, who are survivors of sexual violence or sex workers, recovering substances addicts, who face housing insecurity, who have sought/seeking abortion care, or who have undergone or are in the process of gender reassignment.

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The Scholar-Practitioner is a monthly publication of research summaries that targets the research-to-practice-to-research gap for U.S. scholar and practitioner advocates for hidden college student populations.

This publication reinforces the work of the **National Conference for Hidden Student Populations (NCHP)** by providing a space to share research applications for practice. **NCHP** was the first research conference dedicated to this multidisciplinary area of study.

The **NCHP 5th conference** will be held February 19 - 21, 2025, at Arizona State University. [Registration and call for proposals are now open!](#)

Characteristics of students in Collegiate Recovery Programs from an updated national, longitudinal study

Smith, R. L., Bannard, T., McDaniel, J., Aliev, F., Brown, A., Holliday, E., Vest, N., DeFrantz-Dufor, W., Recovery Science Research Collaborative, & Dick, D. M. (2024). COVID-19: An updated national longitudinal study. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 32(1), 58-67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2023.2216459>

College is often a high-risk period for problematic substance use and the onset of substance use disorders (Welsh et al., 2019). Collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) were developed in the 1970s to provide recovery support to college students so they didn't have to choose between their recovery and higher education. The number of CRPs implemented on college campuses has grown to 151 across the U.S. with a growing number in Canada and the U.K. (Association of Recovery in Higher Education, 2022). However, relatively little is known about CRP students; only one national study was conducted nearly a decade ago (see Laudet et al., 2015). In addition, there are no longitudinal studies on this topic. The goal of this study was to fill this gap by (1) describing the development of the first national longitudinal study of CRP students, which is still ongoing; (2) providing an updated characterization of students affiliated with CRPs; and (3) examining the perceived impact of COVID-19 on CRP students.

Beginning in Fall 2020, we recruited three cohorts of CRP participants (N = 334) from 43 universities and community colleges across the U.S. and Canada to complete baseline surveys about a variety of topics, including but not limited to substance use history, mental health challenges, academics, and social support. Those who completed baseline surveys were invited to complete follow-up surveys in subsequent semesters. Surveys were designed in partnership with CRP directors, recovery science researchers, and people with lived experience to ensure that the data were relevant and meaningful to practitioners and people in recovery. After each wave of data collection, data were given back to CRPs in the form of aggregated and school-specific data reports and presentations.

The sample of CRP students was mostly White, cisgender, undergraduate women with an average age of 29 years. Students in CRPs had challenging backgrounds—most met lifetime criteria for a severe alcohol or substance use disorder, many had comorbid

mental health challenges, slightly less than half had overdosed at least once in their lifetime, and about half had been involved with the criminal legal system. Despite these challenges, students in CRPs were functioning well and reported high quality of life. They had about 4 years in recovery, spent between 5-6 hours per week engaged in recovery-related activities, and had high levels of recovery capital (i.e., the total resources to sustain their recovery). Students had strong GPAs while balancing working an average of 19 hours per week. Students reported that the CRPs played an important role in providing social, academic, and recovery-related resources, and they identified CRPs as places where they generally felt welcomed, safe, and supported. Overall, these findings were consistent with and expanded upon those from Laudet et al.'s (2015) study.

These findings are important as they can help practitioners, CRP directors, and college administrators understand the types, backgrounds, and strengths of students who participate in CRPs. Moreover, these findings provide evidence of perceived CRP effectiveness, as students report that CRPs are a hub for multiple forms of support that help them maintain their recovery while pursuing their education. Practitioners and CRP directors can use this information to tailor treatment services and programming to students' specific needs and strengths. In particular, CRP directors can assess their current program offerings, and use findings from this

study to make sure they are offering a range of social, academic, and recovery supports to help students overcome the challenges faced and continue to build their recovery capital. The findings can also be used to justify CRPs on campus as critical to helping students thrive and to advocate for additional funding to support programming to better meet students' needs. College administrators can learn from these findings and understand that having college students in recovery on campus is an asset. They can implement important policies that reduce barriers that this student population commonly faces (e.g., history of criminal legal involvement) and implement those that promote success (e.g., special consideration to admission overrides and financial aid).

Many students in CRP programs have experienced a variety of challenges in their lifetimes, including severe substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and criminal legal system involvement. CRPs are effective at helping students in a variety of ways, and most students in CRPs are functioning well across academic, social, and personal domains. Findings from this study can be used by practitioners, CRP directors, and college administration alike to improve services and program offerings to CRP students.

References

Association of Recovery in Higher Education. (2022). Collegiate recovery programs. Association of Recovery in Higher Education. <https://collegiaterecovery.org/crps-cracs/>

Laudet, A. B., Harris, K., Kimball, T., Winters, K. C., Moberg, D. P. (2015). Characteristics of students participating in collegiate recovery programs: A national survey. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 51, 38-46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2014.11.004>

Welsh, J. W., Shentu, Y., & Sarvey, D. B. (2019). Substance use among college students. *Focus (American Psychiatric Publishing)*, 17(2), 117-127. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.focus.20180037>

NCHP

Save the date!

Feb 19 - 21, 2025

Arizona State University

Register [here](#)

Call for Proposals **NOW OPEN!**

Team Leader - Become a team leader of a multidisciplinary research team. Deadline October 1, 2024 (notifications by November 1)

Team Member - Become a new multidisciplinary research team member. Deadline October 31, 2024 (notifications by December 1)

Presentations - Present an original empirical work or practice. Deadline January 10, 2025 (notifications by January 21)

PDQs - Lead a think tank discussion. Deadline January 10, 2025 (notifications by January 21)

More information: nchp.okstate.edu

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