There is little doubt that alcohol and marijuana use can negatively effect academic success.

Some sobering facts...

- Alcohol is involved in 40% of cases of lowered academic performance.
- Alcohol is a factor in 15% of all students who drop out of college, and 7% of first-year dropouts.
- The heaviest drinkers make the lowest grades.
- Heavy drinking has the greatest negative effect on academic performance during the first two years of college.
- Increases in average number of drinks per week are related to decreased class attendance, decreased study time, poor quality sleep, and getting behind on school work.

A recent Harvard study indicates that those students who drink more spend less time studying. Compared to non-drinkers, students who drank studied 15-minutes less per week for every alcoholic beverage they consumed. Thus, a student who consumes 12 drinks/week on average studies three-hours less each week than a non-drinker.

According to a 2013 study that followed 1,200 college freshmen over a 10-year period, marijuana use contributes to skipping more classes, less time studying, lower grades, dropping out of college, and being under- or unemployed four years following graduation.
SHORT-TERM EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL INTOXICATION

After heavy use, alcohol will affect sleep, memory, and concentration for up to 72 hours.

**Sleep.** Intoxication inhibits REM sleep, a stage of sleep associated with learning and memory functions. REM deprivation has been linked with learning impairment for up to 72 hours following intoxication.

**Memory.** Alcohol impairs memory by inhibiting the transfer and consolidation of information into long-term memory—so intoxication reduces our ability to remember information that we learned prior to alcohol consumption. Memory function can be affected for up to three days.

**Concentration.** Perhaps most importantly, your attention span is shorter for periods up to three days following intoxication, resulting in poor note taking, decreased reading speed and reading comprehension, less efficient studying, and poor abstract thinking.

In addition to cognitive impairments, intoxication and the recovery period wastes time that might be better spent studying or having fun.

EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA INTOXICATION

**Short-term consequences include:** a) attention and concentration difficulties, b) decreased working memory, c) decreased information processing, and d) decreased decision response speed.

**Longer-term consequences include:** a) impaired planning organizing and problem solving, b) deficits in the allocation of attentional resources and filtering out irrelevant information, c) poor retrieval from long-term memory, and d) and poor verbal memory.

BUILDING YOUR HUMAN CAPITAL

Your college education is an opportunity to increase your human capital. Take advantage!

**Academics first.** Develop a positive attitude about self-education and self-worth. Learning is a participatory active process of inquiry, questioning, and intellectual exploration. Make yourself available to the learning process by actively engaging in the learning dialogue.

**Good time management.** Work on managing your time efficiently and effectively. It will take some work to develop a good balance between academics, work, and socializing.

**Creative stress reduction.** Find creative and constructive ways to relieve stress and enjoy the company of friends. Enjoy a mix of stress-relieving activities to create a balanced life-style.

**Avoid poor alcohol decisions.** Decisions you make now will affect your future career. For example, arrests for public intoxication, use of a fake ID, and DUI can cost you a future job, especially.

**Avoid marijuana use.** Students who use marijuana experience lost opportunities for internships, work and special studies while in college, take longer to graduate, and are twice as likely to be unemployed or only employed part-time four years following graduation.

POSITIVE CONSUMPTION GUIDELINES

- **No-Risk Guideline:** For women who are not pregnant, the Dietary Guidelines for women is no more than one drink a day. For men no more than two per day.

- **Low-Risk Guideline:** For women, no more than seven drinks per week, and no more than three drinks in any one day. For men, no more than 14 drinks per week, and no more than four drinks in any one day.

PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES THAT INCREASE POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Drink only for positive reasons.
- Avoid or reduce tolerance.
- Hydrate before and while drinking.
- Eat food both before and while drinking.
- Pace your consumption.
- Keep track of drinks and count drinks.
- Consume plenty of water and other nonalcoholic beverages.
- Use or be a non-drinking driver.
- Never ride with a drinking driver.
- Know the warning signs of alcohol poisoning.