

FINGER LAKES

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HWS professor's college drinking article included in journal

GENEVA — Hobart and William Smith Colleges professor of sociology H. Wesley Perkins has published an article in a special issue of the journal *Addictive Behaviors*, focusing on college student drinking.

This November issue is devoted to the theme of Reducing Alcohol Consumption in University Students.

Perkins' article, "Misperceptions of peer drinking norms in Canada: Another look at the 'reign of error' and its consequences among college students," examines college students across

Canada, where more than 5,200 students at 11 colleges and universities were surveyed about their perceptions of drinking norms and their own behavior.

Regardless of the drinking norm on each campus, students most commonly overestimated the alcohol consumption (both quantity and frequency levels) in every instance.

Students' perception of their school's drinking norm was the strongest predictor of the amount of alcohol personally consumed. It was also a stronger predictor of per-

sonal use than the actual campus norm for consumption or the actual norm for compliance with campus regulations at their school.

The survey found that among students who abstain or consume alcohol lightly, those who misperceived the student drinking norm were most alienated from campus life.

The data extend the evidence previously found in the United States that peer drinking norms are grossly misperceived. The data suggest that a broad range of students may benefit from implementing inter-

vention strategies that can correct or reduce these misperceptions of social norms.

Perkins, a member of the faculty since 1978, has a bachelor's degree from Purdue University and two master's and a doctorate from Yale.

He popularized the Social Norms theory with work beginning more than two decades ago, and in collaboration with professor of chemistry David Craig, has received numerous awards for its applications in preventing alcohol abuse and other risk behaviors.