

# **Trends in Alcohol Use Among Ohio State Students: A Comparison of the 2009 and 2014 NCHA**

Center for the Study of Student Life

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- The percentage of undergraduates who have never used alcohol slightly increased from 2009 (14.6%) to 2014 (16.6%).
- The most frequent response by graduate students of how many days they used alcohol in the past 30 days was 3-5 days. The percentage of students selecting this response was similar in 2009 (21.2%) and 2014 (25.1%).
- The percentage of undergraduate students who reported binge drinking (drinking 5 or more drinks of alcohol at a sitting) declined slightly from 47.8% in 2009 to 42.8% in 2014.
- While approximately 74% of graduate students reported that they did not binge drink within the past two weeks, around 26% reported binge drinking one or more times during the same time period. These statistics did not significantly change from 2009 to 2014.
- In 2009, 17.4% of undergraduates and 36.8% of graduate students reported driving after having any alcohol compared with 13.8% and 35.5% in 2014, respectively.
- 2% or fewer undergraduate students reported driving after having 5 or more drinks of alcohol in both 2009 and 2014. Fewer than 1% of graduate students reported driving after binge drinking in 2014, compared with 3.9% in 2009.
- Undergraduates reported statistically significant declines over time in the percentage of those who physically injured themselves (20.6% in 2009 v. 14.5% in 2014), physically injured others (2.8% in 2009 v. 1.2% in 2014) or got in trouble with the police (3.7% in 2009 v. 1.9% in 2014) while drinking alcohol.
- 5.5% of undergraduates reported that their academic performance had been affected by drinking alcohol in 2014, which is a statistically significant decline from the 8.8% who reported similar affects in 2009.
- Among graduate students, there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of students who reported they had unprotected sex when drinking alcohol from 2009 (6.4%) to 2014 (12.5%).

## INTRODUCTION

This report examines trends in self-reported alcohol use by Ohio State students in 2009 and 2014. The data are from the American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment II (NCHA), a voluntary, web-based survey that assesses topics of general health and wellness. The Ohio State University participates in this national survey every two to three years. In spring 2014, the survey was administered 10,000 of students and yielded a response rate of 11.1%. The survey was also conducted in 2009 (21.2% response rate). The two datasets were combined and only students on the Columbus campus were analyzed, for a total of 3,084 respondents. Results are presented separately for undergraduate (2,369) and graduate/professional students (N=715). Statistically significant changes over time are noted at the  $p < .05$  level or below. Please note that, given the low response rate in 2014, results should be interpreted with caution and should not be assumed to be generalizable.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender	%
Male	37.2%
Female	62.6%
Transgender	0.2%

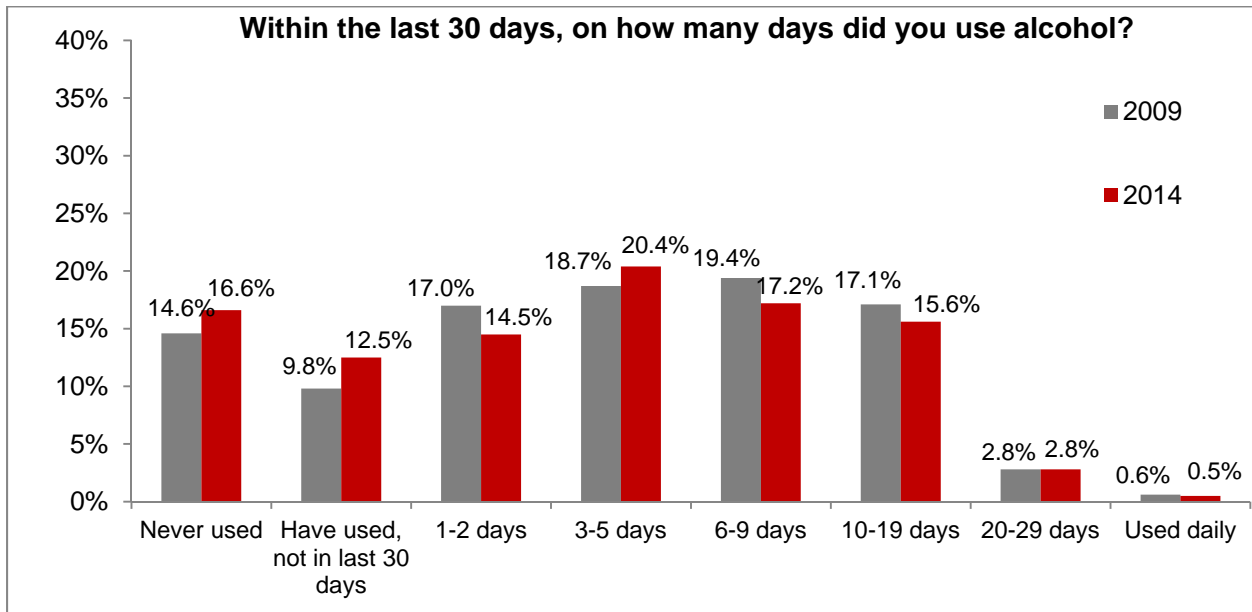
Class Rank	%
Undergraduate	75.2%
Graduate/Professional	24.8%

Race/Ethnicity	%
African American	4.4%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0.2%
Asian American	9.0%
Latino/Hispanic	2.1%
Two or more races	2.5%
Other race	2.0%
White	79.9%

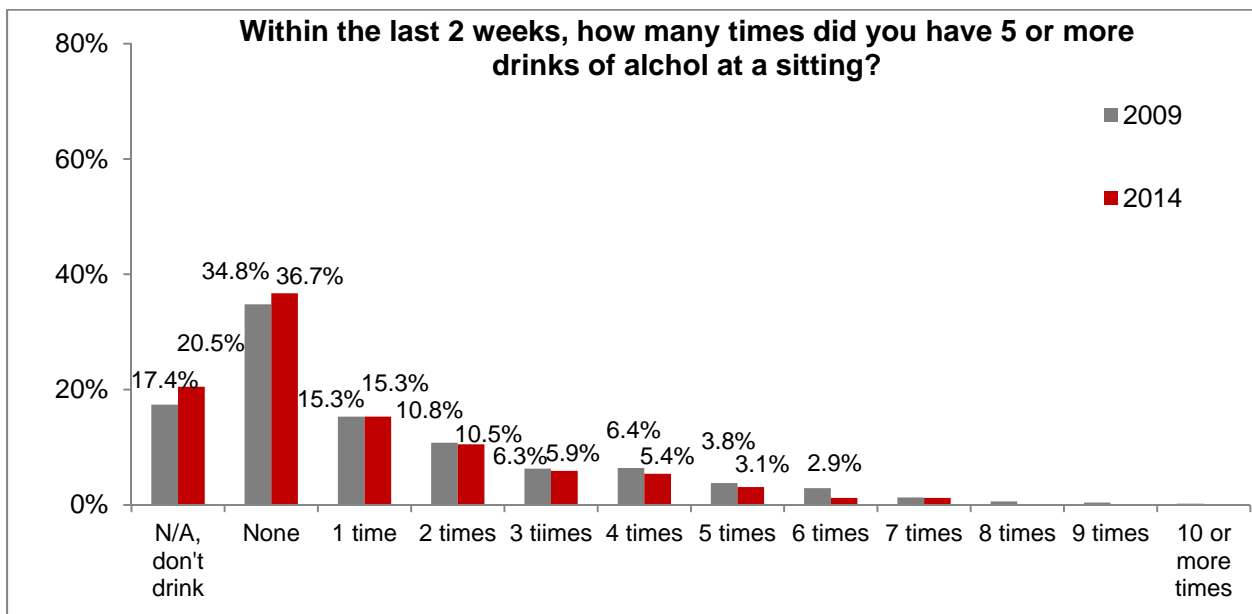
## RESULTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

### Trends in Frequency of Drinking – Undergraduate Students

In 2014, 16.6% of students report never using alcohol while 12.5% had used alcohol in the past but not during the last 30 days. In 2009, 14.6% of students never used and 9.8% had used but not in the last 30 days. Less than 1% of students used alcohol daily in both 2009 and 2014, while 2.8% used between 20 and 29 days out of the last year in both years. This change was not statistically significant.



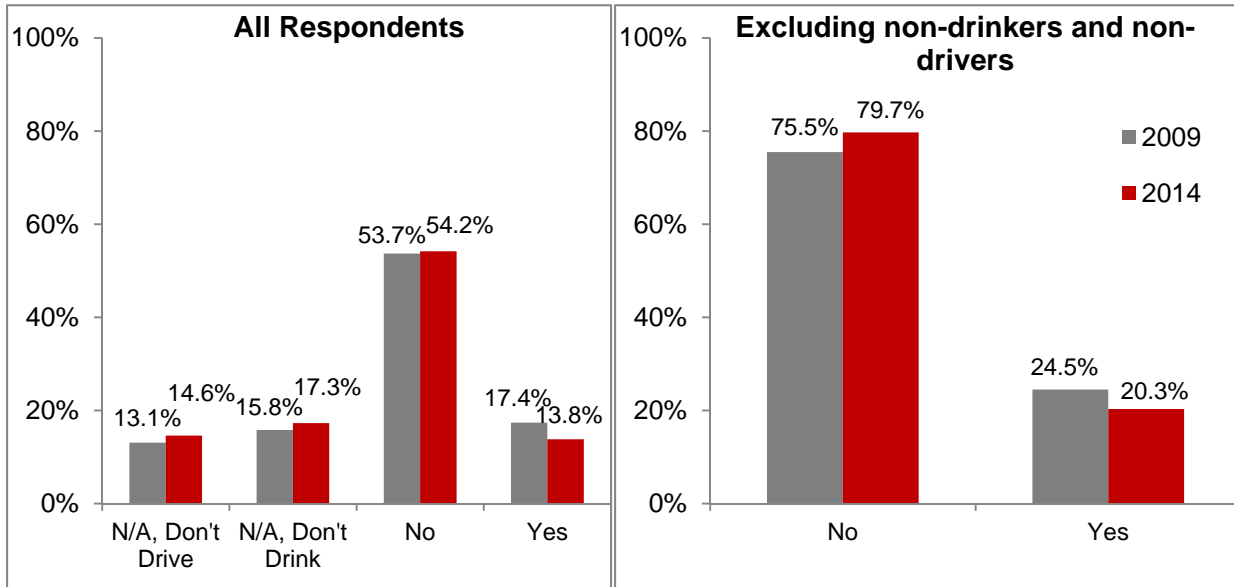
Binge drinking behavior has also decreased since 2009. In 2009, 52.2% of students reported that they didn't drink or if they did drink, they did not binge drink, compared with 57.2% of students in 2014. This change was not statistically significant.



## Trends in Drinking and Driving - Undergraduate Students

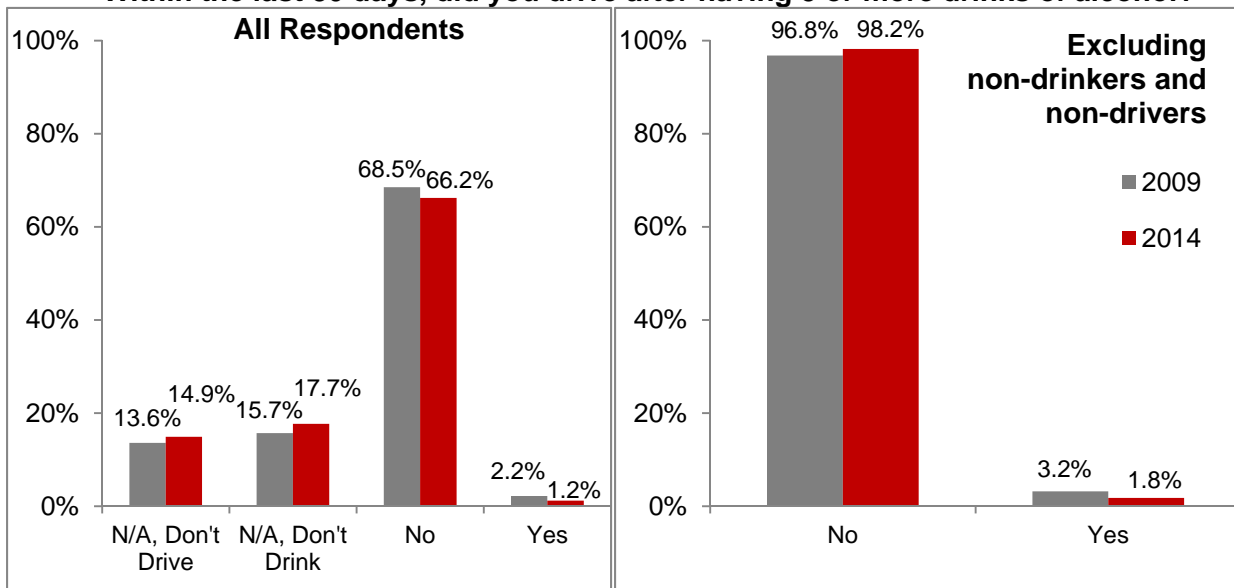
When examining all students, in 2009, 17.4% reported that they had driven after drinking any alcohol in the last 30 days, compared with 13.8% of students in 2014. When examining only students who reported that they had driven and they had drunk alcohol, 24.5% reported driving after drinking alcohol in 2009, compared with 20.3% in 2014. Changes over time were not statistically significant for either group of students.

### Within the last 30 days, did you drive after drinking any alcohol?



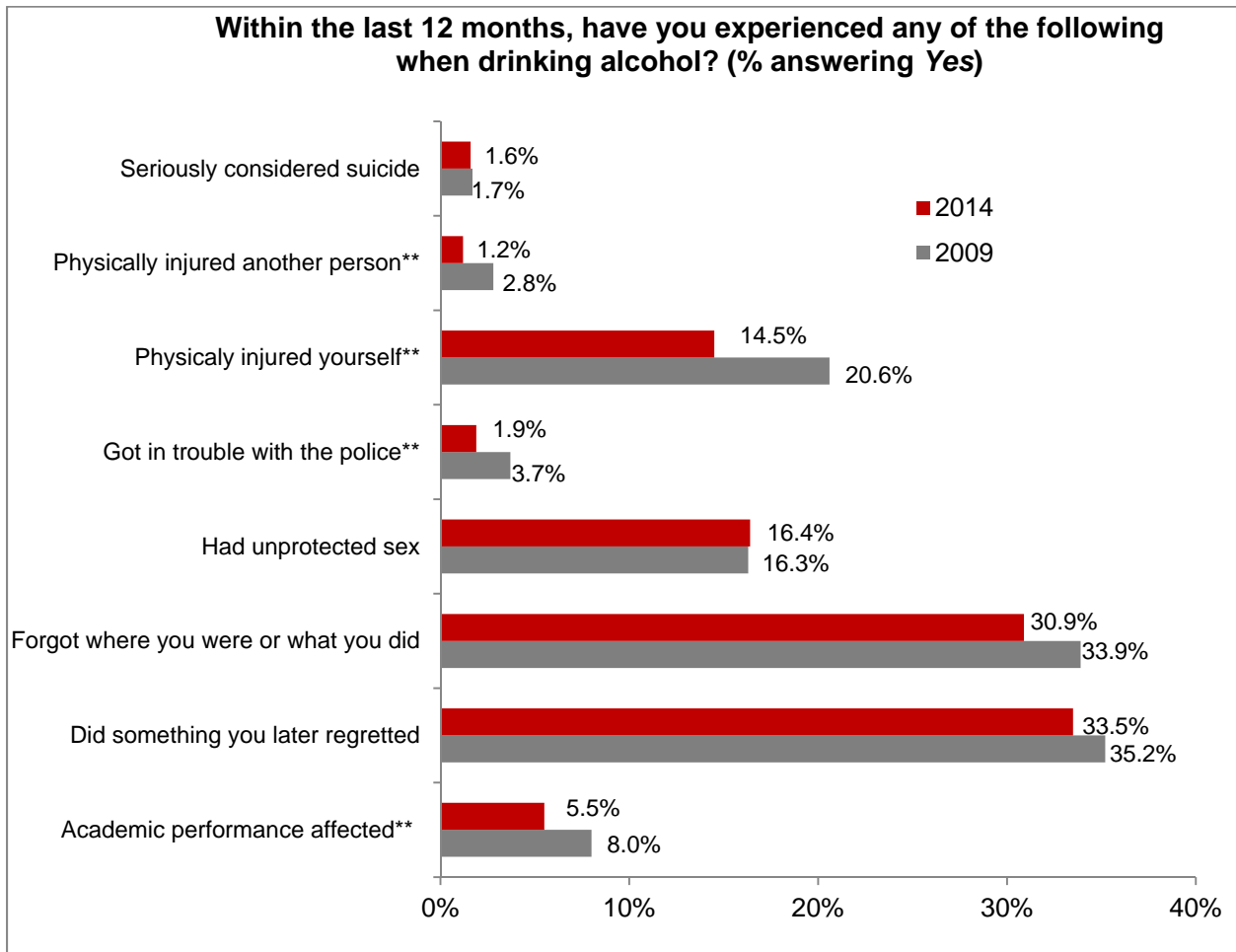
Among all students, around 2% or fewer reported driving after having 5 or more drinks of alcohol in both 2009 and 2014. Among students who reported that they drive and they also drink alcohol, in 3.2% report driving after having 5 or more drinks, compared with 1.8% in 2014. Changes over time were not statistically significant for either group of students.

### Within the last 30 days, did you drive after having 5 or more drinks of alcohol?



## Trends in Drinking Consequences - Undergraduate Students

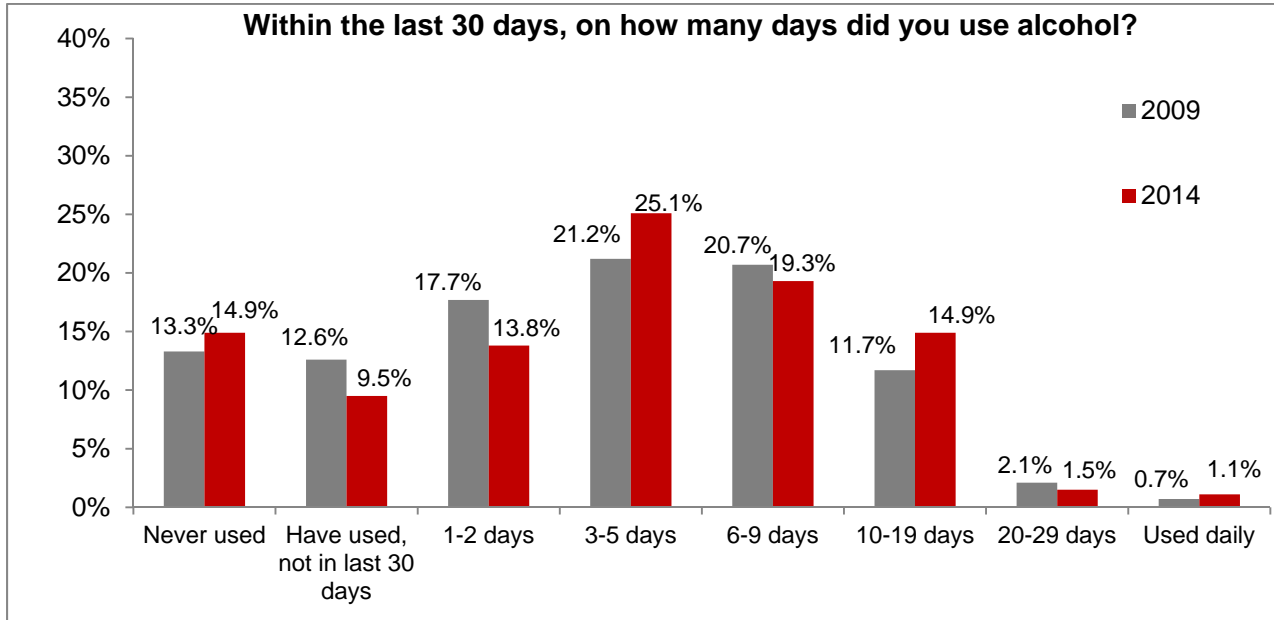
This section examines the consequences of drinking alcohol. Students were asked if, within the last 12 months, they had experienced any of a series of consequences when drinking alcohol. There were no significant changes over time in students reporting that they seriously considered suicide, had unprotected sex, forgot where they were or what they did, or did something they later regretted as a result of drinking alcohol. There were statistically significant changes over time in the percentages of students who answered they had physically injured another person, physically injured themselves, got in trouble with the police, or their academic performance was affected. For each of these consequences, the reported incidents declined over time.



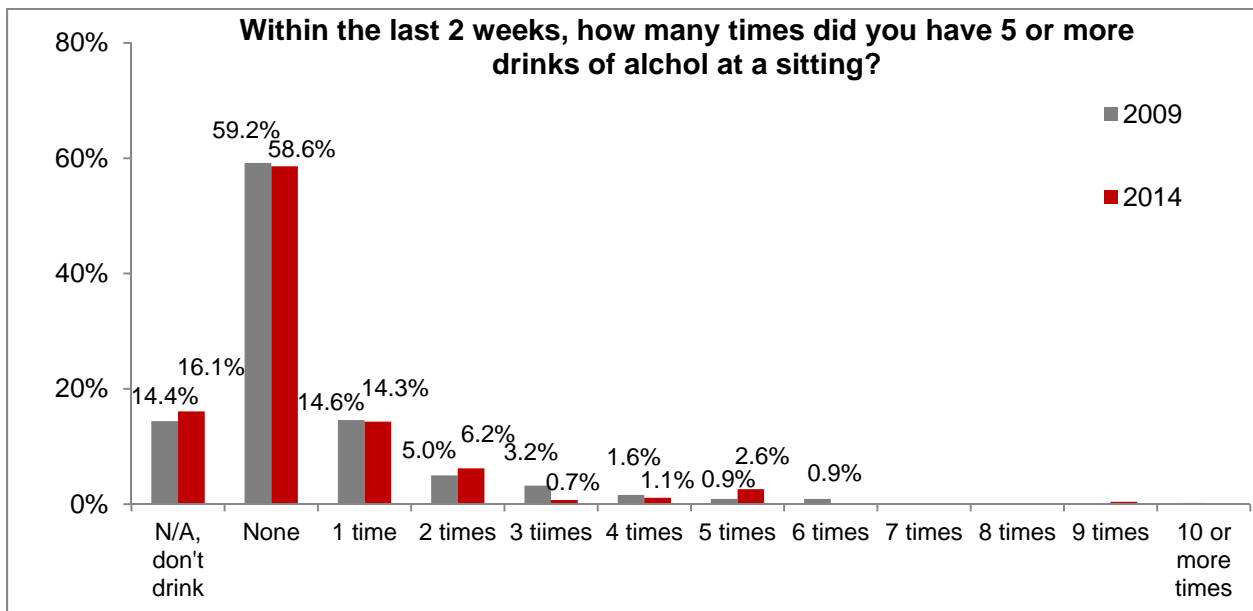
## RESULTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

### Trends in Frequency of Drinking – Graduate Students

In 2014, 14.9% of students reported not using alcohol compared with 13.3% of students in 2009. The percentage of students who used alcohol daily was 0.7% in 2009 and 1.1% in 2014. This change was not statistically significant.



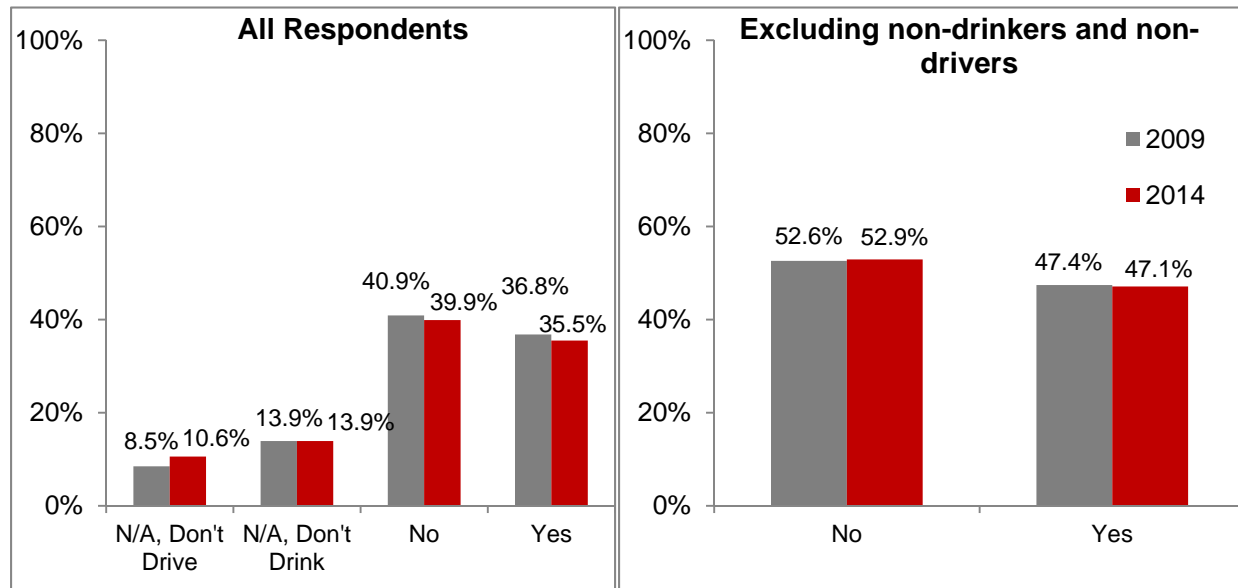
Binge drinking behavior did not significantly change over time; 59.2% of students in 2009 reported that they drank but did not binge drink in the past two weeks, compared with 58.6% in 2014. Approximately 14% of students reported binge drinking one time in the past two weeks in both 2009 and 2014.



## Trends in Drinking and Driving – Graduate Students

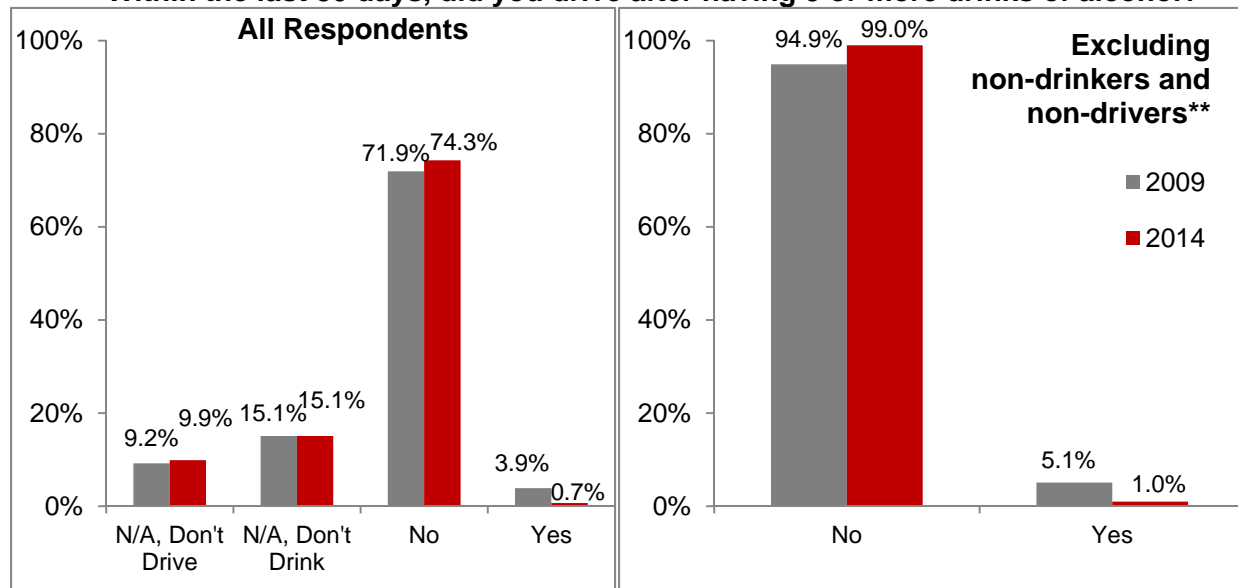
Among all graduate students in 2009, 36.8% reported that they had driven after drinking any alcohol compared with 35.5% in 2014. When examining only students who drank and who also drove, 47.4% reported driving after drinking alcohol in 2009, compared with 47.1% in 2014. Changes over time were not statistically significant for either group of students.

### Within the last 30 days, did you drive after drinking any alcohol?



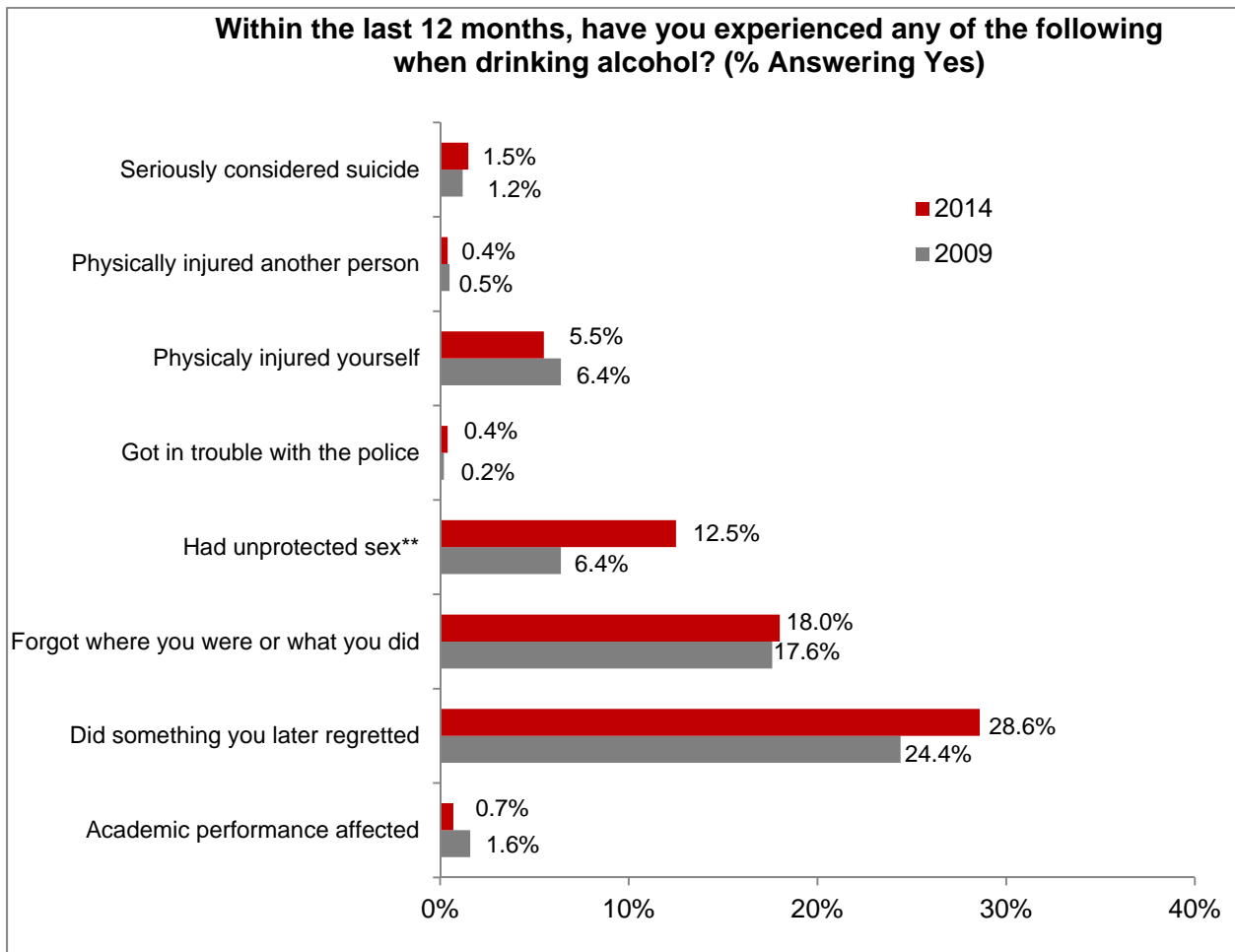
Among all students, around 3.9% reported driving after having 5 or more drinks of alcohol in 2009, compared with only 0.7% in 2014. This change was not statistically significant. Among students who reported that they drove and they also drank alcohol, 5.1% reported driving after having 5 or more drinks in 2009, compared with 1.0% in 2014. This decline was statistically significant.

### Within the last 30 days, did you drive after having 5 or more drinks of alcohol?



## Trends in Drinking Consequences – Graduate Students

Students were asked if, within the last 12 months, they had experienced any of a series of consequences when drinking alcohol. There were no significant changes over time in students reporting that they seriously considered suicide, physically injured another person, physically injured themselves, got in trouble with the police, forgot where they were or what they did, did something they later regretted or their academic performance was affected. There was a statistically significant increase from 2009 to 2014 in the percentage of students who reported having unprotected sex when drinking alcohol (6.4% v. 12.5%, respectively).





## SUMMARY

Alcohol use and abuse among college students is a continuing concern for higher education administrators and students affairs practitioners. This report examines trends on alcohol use among undergraduate and graduate students at The Ohio State University in 2009 and 2014 by analyzing data from the American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment II. Results indicate that there have been few statistically significant changes in alcohol use over time by students. Among undergraduates, respondents reported statistically significant declines in experiencing the following consequences while drinking alcohol: physically injuring themselves, physically injuring another person, getting in trouble with the police or having their academic performance affected. Among graduate students who reported that they drove and also drank alcohol, there was a statistically significant decline in the percentage who drove after having 5 or more drinks of alcohol from 2009 (5.1%) to 2014 (1.0%). Graduate student respondents also reported a statistically significant increase in the percentage who had unprotected sex when drinking alcohol (6.4% in 2009 v. 12.5% in 2014).

University efforts could focus on educating graduate students on the risks of unprotected sex and drinking and driving, as well as continuing to educate all students about using alcohol in a safe and responsible way. The Office of Student Life's Student Wellness Center should serve as a resource for alcohol education efforts on campus, as it has programs and services designed to educate students about drinking in college, including the pros and cons of drinking, the physiological effects of drinking and assists students in setting goals and generating strategies for minimizing the harmful consequences of drinking. The Student Life Student Wellness Center also offers all students access to BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students), a program for students who may want to explore their alcohol and drug use in order to reduce risky behaviors and harmful consequences. For more information, see [www.swc.osu.edu](http://www.swc.osu.edu).