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Researcher receives \$3.2 million grant to track alcohol use by college students

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AUSTIN, Texas—A researcher in the College of Liberal Arts at The University of Texas at Austin, has received a \$3.2 million research grant to track the alcohol use and associated behavioral risks of students transitioning from high school through their college years.

The grant was awarded to Dr. Kim Fromme, associate professor of clinical psychology, by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and will be used over the next five years.

“Developmental trajectories of alcohol use and abuse have been identified across the college years, but little is known about the behavioral risks such as risky sex and aggression associated with collegiate drinking,” Fromme said. “Identification of the factors that increase or decrease these types of behaviors during college will have significant implications for the types of university policies and prevention programs that are likely to be successful.”

“The UT Experience!” study will examine the association between personality traits, background, individual and environmental factors, alcohol use and behavior risks. Over the next four years, about 5,200 participants from the university, beginning with the freshman class for the fall of 2004, will complete Web-based surveys and self-monitoring at different frequencies within the sample. The behavioral outcomes assessed for participants include academic, alcohol use and behavioral risks such as risky sex, aggression, sexual assault, illicit drug use, reckless driving and driving after drinking alcohol.

Laboratory assessments will also be used to assess potential differences in cognitive functions and behavioral inhibition among a representative sub-sample of students who change their drinking patterns.

Fromme will work with co-investigator Dr. William Corbin from the Department of Psychology at Yale University.

For more information contact: Dr. Kim Fromme, 512-471-0039.

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