

In 2012, I was having a very difficult time managing my work life, school life, and homelife. I had been abusing drugs and alcohol since 2005. In 2012 I decided to reach out for help. I was enrolled at UNO at the time and the first place I thought to seek help was the counselling department. I found that locating the information and help I was looking for was rather difficult. The only thing I felt comfortable doing was emailing one of the university's drug and alcohol counselors. In the email, I described what I was going through and that I was seeking help. I was invited to make an appointment and that UNO had services available for me. However, I did not feel comfortable making an appointment to meet a complete stranger to deal with a problem that I was terrified of. A few months later, I got in some legal trouble and was required to attend AA meetings.

In 27 days I will have been sober for 2 years. I am stable in my school life, my recovery, and my personal life. I have an academic scholarship and hold a GPA of 3.8. I sponsor other men in the program of AA and have seen my work life and personal life improve drastically. My journey through recovery has been fairly indescribable. There have been very high points and very low points. Overall, my journey has been amazing. I have met wonderful people and had my outlook on life has completely changed.

Sobriety has had a substantial impact on my collegiate career. I went from a failing student to the Dean's list almost immediately. I can make it to class on time, do my work, and retain information; which was impossible when I was not in recovery.

I remember preparing for my first AA meeting. I was thumbing through my "Where and When," looking for the meeting that sounded the least terrifying. As I was looking at addresses I noticed one that seemed to be right around UNO. Then I noticed it was *at* UNO, in the HPER building. I was scared but I felt that a meeting on campus, with other students who were like me, would be the most comfortable. Before finding the "UNO Lunch Hour Meeting" in the "Where and When," I had no idea that there were AA meetings on campus. The perspective of a still-struggling alcoholic is a warped one.

Help for alcoholism and addiction seems like an “outside” issue for a small, weird, percentage of the population. I felt very alone and scared. I felt that my first meeting would have one or two people at it and was surprised welcomed by around fifteen people.

I think the campus could make information on alcoholism and addiction more available to students who are seeking it and I don't just mean pamphlets with general information about addiction (I already knew I was an alcoholic when I sought help) to let the sufferer know that they are not alone and that this disease is common, even among college students. I would like to see an organization of students on campus whose purpose is to be there for these people who feel so alone and make addiction something more approachable and less intimidating. Had something like that existed when I first reached out for help, it may have saved my family and me more suffering. I know many students on campus, including myself, who could benefit from more available on-campus AA meetings.