

Cinco de Mayo
Student Disturbance

University of Cincinnati
Follow-up Student Survey

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Follow-up Cinco de Mayo Student Survey

In March 2004, undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Cincinnati were e-mailed and asked to complete a web-based survey concerning their participation, awareness, and perceptions of the past Cinco de Mayo parties held on Stratford Street. This project was undertaken as part of an effort to develop short- and long-term prevention strategies to address off-campus student disturbances that have occurred twice (2002, 2003) in celebration of Cinco de Mayo. The initial student survey produced evidence suggesting that many students were expecting a large street party to take place around the fifth of May in 2004. Additionally, a large number of students expressed interest in attending the event. However, following this initial survey and subsequent interventions implemented by the U.C. administration, the Cincinnati Police Department, and other community organizations, a large Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford did not occur.

The current report outlines the results of a follow-up survey that was administered to students following the absence of a large Cinco de Mayo street party. Following a description of sample criteria and survey methodology, this report presents the findings from the follow-up U.C. student survey in four major sections. The first section describes the students' general awareness and plans to attend the annual Cinco de Mayo party prior to the month of May. The second section describes attendance at smaller Cinco de Mayo parties held on Stratford Street between May 1 and May 8, 2004, as well as reasons students gave for attending these parties. The third section summarizes student reactions to the absence of a 2004 Cinco de Mayo street party. The fourth section outlines student projections for a large Cinco de Mayo street party in 2005.

Survey Method and Sample

The criteria used to select a student sample for the initial U.C. Cinco de Mayo survey was used again for the current inquiry. The following is the list of criteria used for selecting student participants:

- Currently enrolled in Winter term 2004 on West Campus
- Undergraduate status
- Between 18 and 26 years old
- Full- or part-time student
- Had an e-mail address that had been verified within the last 90 days

There were 11,968 students who met the above criteria as of March 1, 2004. An e-mail explaining the purpose of the survey and a link to the website housing the survey was sent to these students on May 26, 2004. The students were assured that the survey was anonymous. All identifying information was stripped from the survey when the student submitted his or her responses. Students were able to submit their responses until June 11, 2004. A total of 1,314 surveys were completed and submitted.

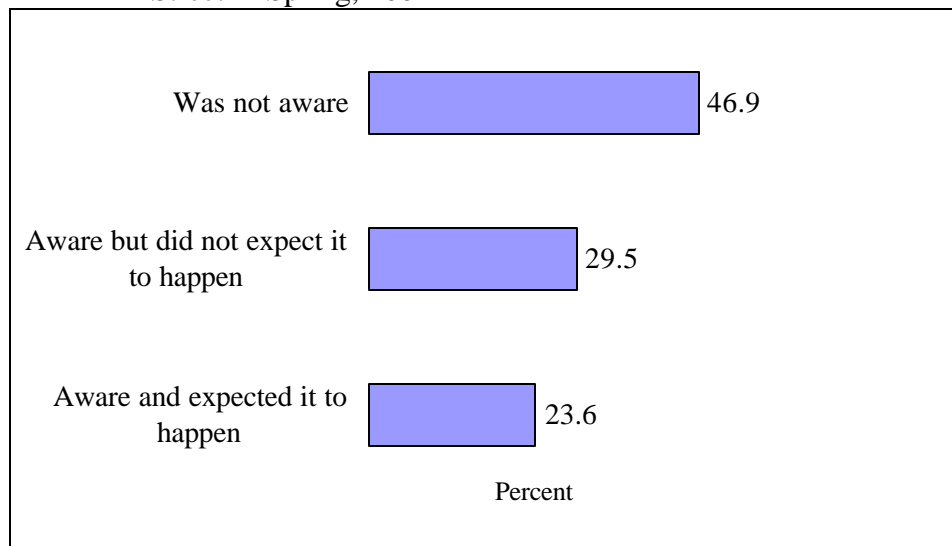
The survey results cannot be generalized to the entire sample due to the relatively low response rate (11.2%)¹. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the findings are representative of the University's undergraduate population. However, the results indicate that the majority of those who submitted a completed survey were aware of plans for a 2005 Cinco de Mayo street party and almost a quarter of these students planned to attend the event. These students' responses may lend insight into what factors influence student decisions to attend or not attend and how a student disturbance may be avoided again in 2005. Graphs illustrating the demographics of the participating students are presented in Appendix A.

¹ The number of e-mails that were successfully delivered was 11,735.

General Awareness and Student Plans to Attend Party

Students were asked to indicate whether they were aware of plans for a large Cinco de Mayo street party scheduled to take place on Stratford sometime around May 5, 2004. As shown in figure 1, over half (53.1%) of the survey participants reported that they had been aware that such an event was scheduled to occur. However, approximately 56 percent of those who were aware of the Cinco de Mayo street party did not expect the party to happen (result not shown in Figure 1). Only 23.6 percent of students who responded to the follow-up survey were aware of plans for a Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford Street and anticipated that the event would occur.

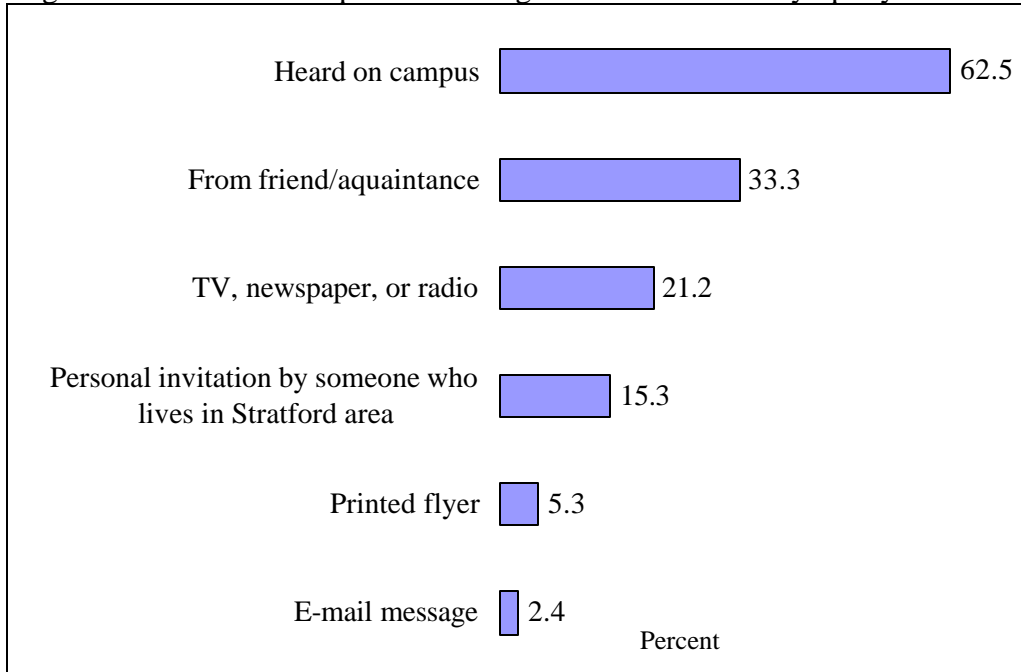
Figure 1. Awareness and expectations of a large Cinco de Mayo party on Stratford Street in Spring, 2004



Students who reported being aware of plans for a large 2004 Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford were asked to describe how they learned about the planned event. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the various methods of communication used by students. Similar to the findings of the initial or pre-Cinco de Mayo survey, most students reported hearing about plans for a 2004 party on campus or from a friend or acquaintance. However, fewer students reported receiving a

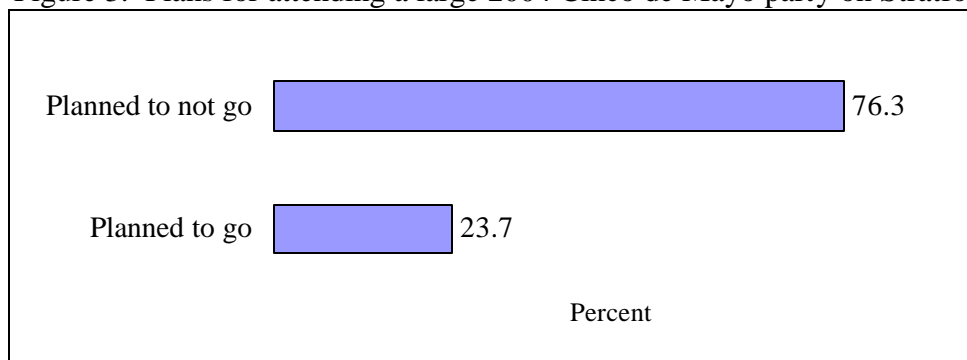
personal invitation from someone who lives in the Stratford area and more reported learning about the party through some form of media coverage than in the initial survey. These findings may reflect the lack of planning or communication on the part of Stratford student residents as well as increased media attention as the anticipated date of the event grew nearer.

Figure 2. Learned about plans for a large 2004 Cinco de Mayo party on Stratford Street



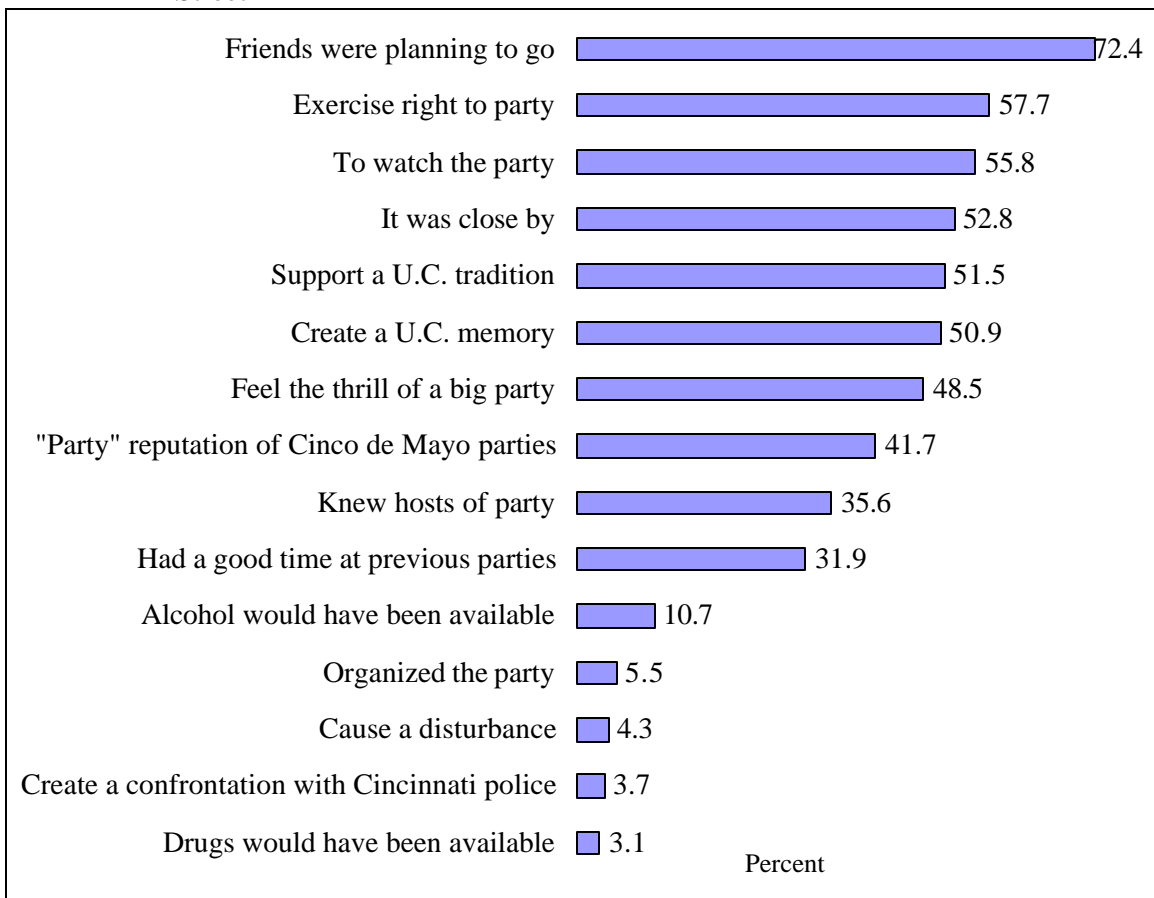
Additionally, students who were aware of the possibility of a Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford were asked whether or not they planned to attend the event. Approximately one-fourth of the respondents reported making plans to attend (n = 156).

Figure 3. Plans for attending a large 2004 Cinco de Mayo party on Stratford Street



Students who planned to attend the expected Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford were asked to indicate all of the factors that influenced their decision to plan to attend. Figure 4 provides a breakdown of the student responses. Identical to the initial survey results that reported decision factors for attendance at previous years' parties, most students reported wanting to attend because their friends were planning to go to the party. Also similar to the previous results, most students were not motivated by the desire to create a disturbance or confrontation or to engage in drug use. The only notable distinction between the current and previous survey results is that the availability of alcohol seems to have played a lesser role in motivating students to attend this year (10.7%) than in previous years (41.6%).

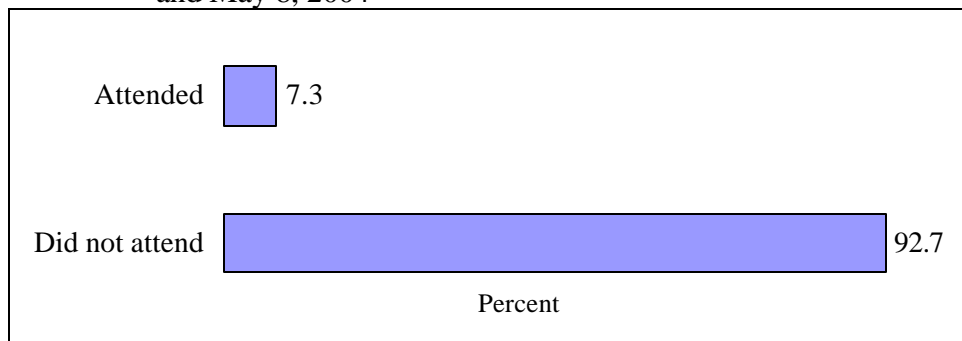
Figure 4. Reasons for planning to attend a large Cinco de Mayo party in 2004 on Stratford Street



Student Attendance of Cinco de Mayo Parties

The media, local residents, the Cincinnati Police Department, and independent observations made by the authors of this report confirmed that the large Cinco de Mayo street party expected to take place on Stratford did not occur. There were no arrests made by the Cincinnati Police Department for riotous behavior; nor was any riotous behavior reported to the authorities. However, some smaller house parties were observed. Approximately 7 percent (n = 92) of the students who participated in the survey reported attending one of the parties on Stratford Street (see Figure 5). These smaller parties were observed by the researchers and appeared well contained on the residents' porch or front yard. The residents and their guests generally remained on their respective properties. Parties held by student residences located within two streets adjacent to Stratford exhibited similar patterns of behavior.

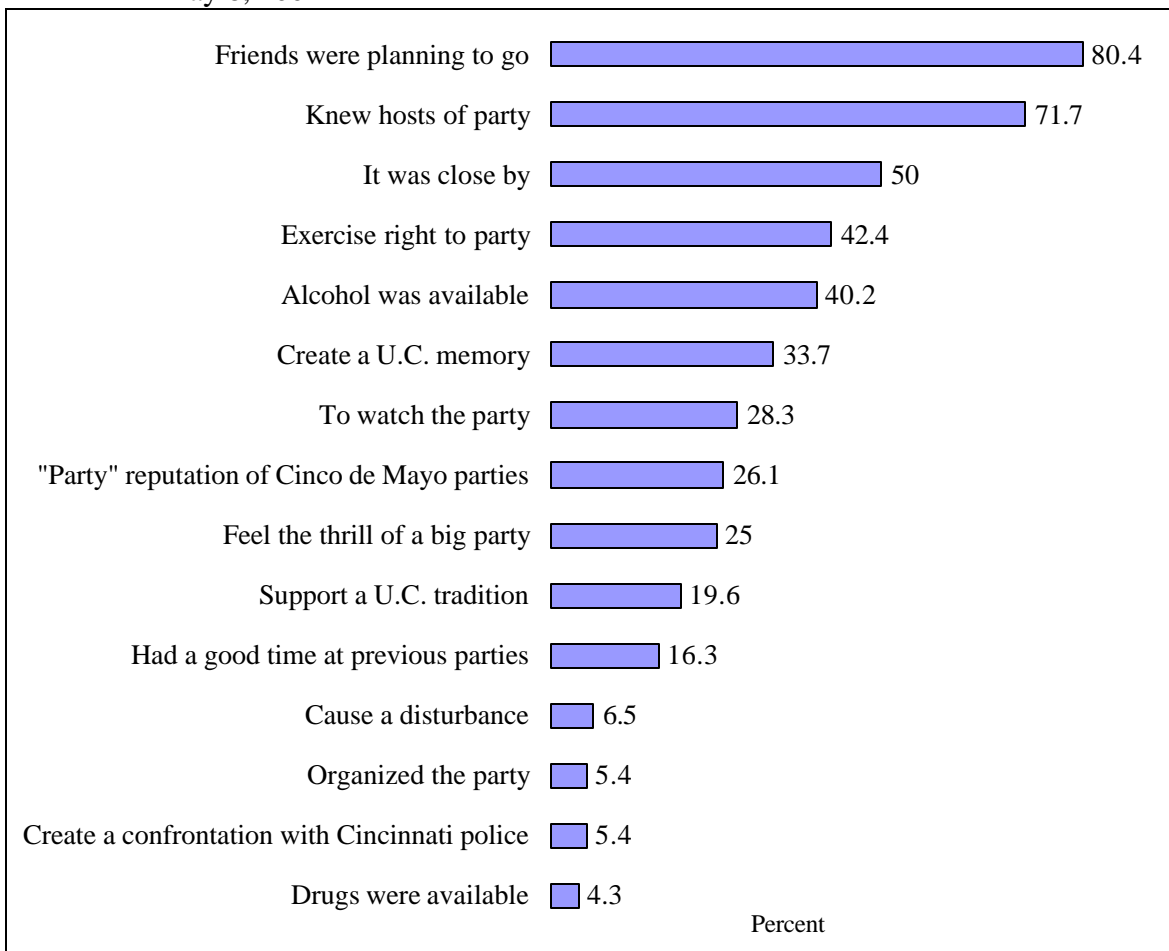
Figure 5. Students who attended any party on Stratford Street between May 1, 2004 and May 8, 2004



Students who reported being present at one of the smaller parties on Stratford Street were asked why they decided to attend (see Figure 6). Identical to the previous survey, the most common response to this question was that students went because their friends were going. As found in the pre-Cinco de Mayo survey results, most students did not report wanting to cause a disturbance, create a confrontation with police, or engage in drug use. It is interesting to note that a substantial number of students who went to one of these smaller parties were expecting a

larger party to take place. A quarter of the students indicated that they went to Stratford to “feel the thrill of a big party.” Somewhat different from the previous survey results, more students indicated that they personally knew the hosts of the party they attended (71.7% vs. 40.7%). This may be one reason why the parties remained contained and did not move into the streets.

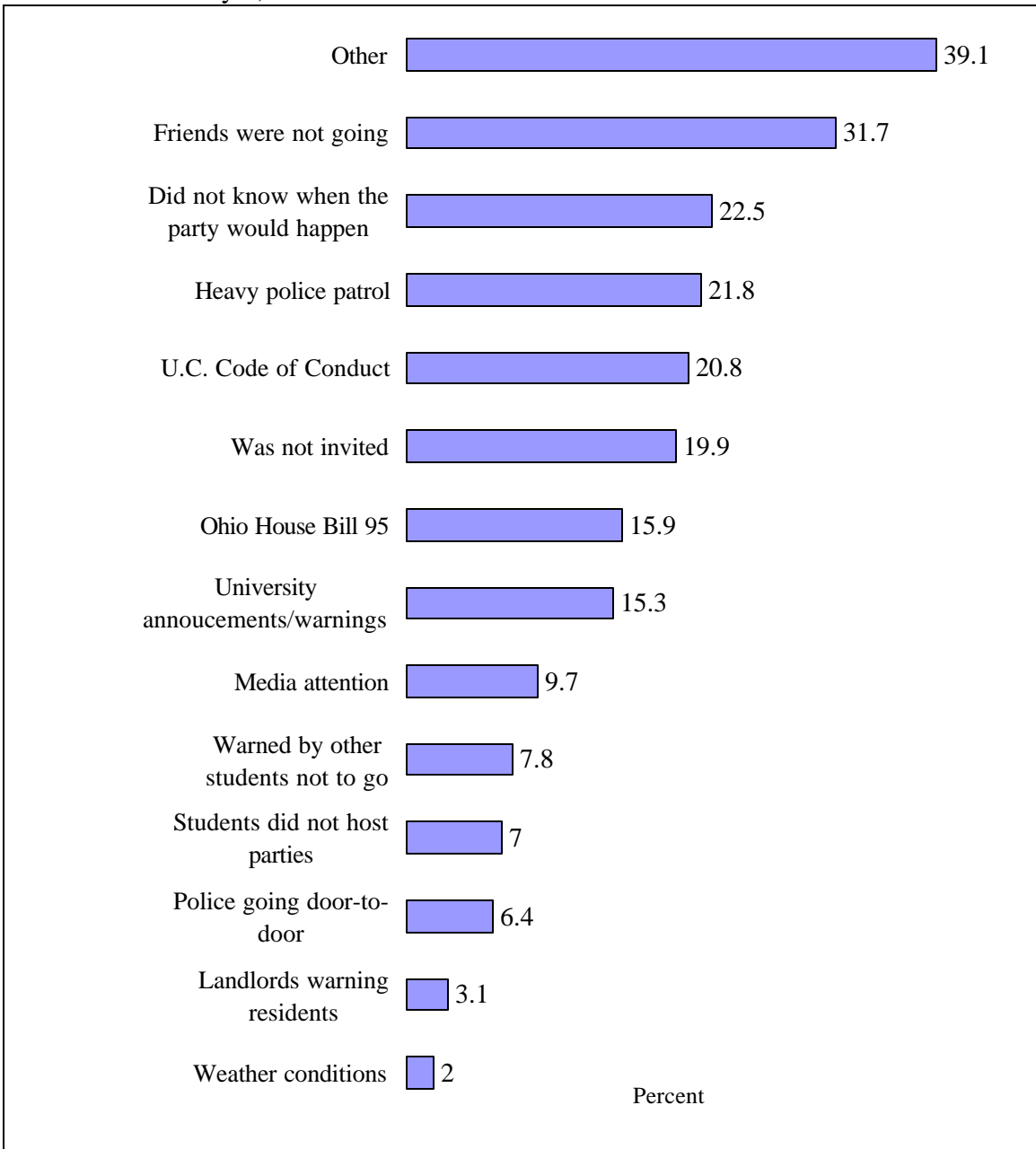
Figure 6. Reasons people attended any party on Stratford Street between May 1, 2004 and May 8, 2004



Students who were aware of plans for a Cinco de Mayo celebration on Stratford but were not present at any of the parties were asked why they decided not to attend (see Figure 7). The threat of sanctions seemed to provide some deterrent effect. Most notably, heavy patrol by the Cincinnati Police Department (21.8%) and the U.C. Code of Conduct (20.8%) influenced student decisions not to attend. Students also said they did not attend because there were unaware of

when the party might be scheduled to happen (22.5%) or because they were not personally invited (19.9%). Again, friends plans were an important factor with 31.7 percent of students not attending because their friends were not going. Interestingly, the most common reason given for not going was reported as “other.”

Figure 7. Reasons students did not attend any party on Stratford Street between May 1, 2004 and May 8, 2004



Students provided qualitative statements if they chose the “other” response to explain why they did not attend. Some of the most common reasons given were that they were not interested, were fearful based on the events that took place during previous parties, had to work, had homework, had other plans, were out of town, or they did not live close by. The most important finding is that a single response cannot represent the variety of reasons students decided not to attend. This may suggest that a multi-faceted approach involving a host of interventions is among the best strategies for preventing large gatherings involving riotous behavior.

Student Reactions to the Absence of a 2004 Street Party

In an effort to determine why the 2004 Cinco de Mayo parties on Stratford Street were smaller than previous years’ parties, students who attended any of the smaller parties between May 1, 2004 and May 8, 2004 were asked why they thought the parties remained small. As illustrated in Figure 8, students overwhelmingly cited heavy police patrol as the most important factor in preventing the anticipated street party (73.9%). The threat of sanction based on the U.C. Code of Conduct was cited second most frequently as an important factor (44.6%). Police going door-to-door to issue warnings prior to the event (33.7%) and knowledge of Ohio House Bill 95 (33.7%) were tied as the third most frequently cited influential interventions.

All students who were aware of plans for a 2004 Cinco de Mayo street party were asked how they felt when the party did not occur (see Figure 9). As would be expected, most of the students who did not plan to go did not care or were not at all disappointed. Perhaps the most important finding concerns the reaction of those who planned to go. These students provided answers that were more evenly distributed across the responses categories. Only a third (33.3%) said they were very disappointed, while almost half (48.7%) of the students who planned to go

said they didn't care, were only a little disappointed, or were not at all disappointed. This finding suggests that future Cinco de Mayo street parties may be relatively easy to discourage since the majority of students are not overwhelmingly committed to attending the event.

Figure 8. Student perceptions of why the 2004 parties were smaller than the previous years' parties (of students who attended a party on Stratford)

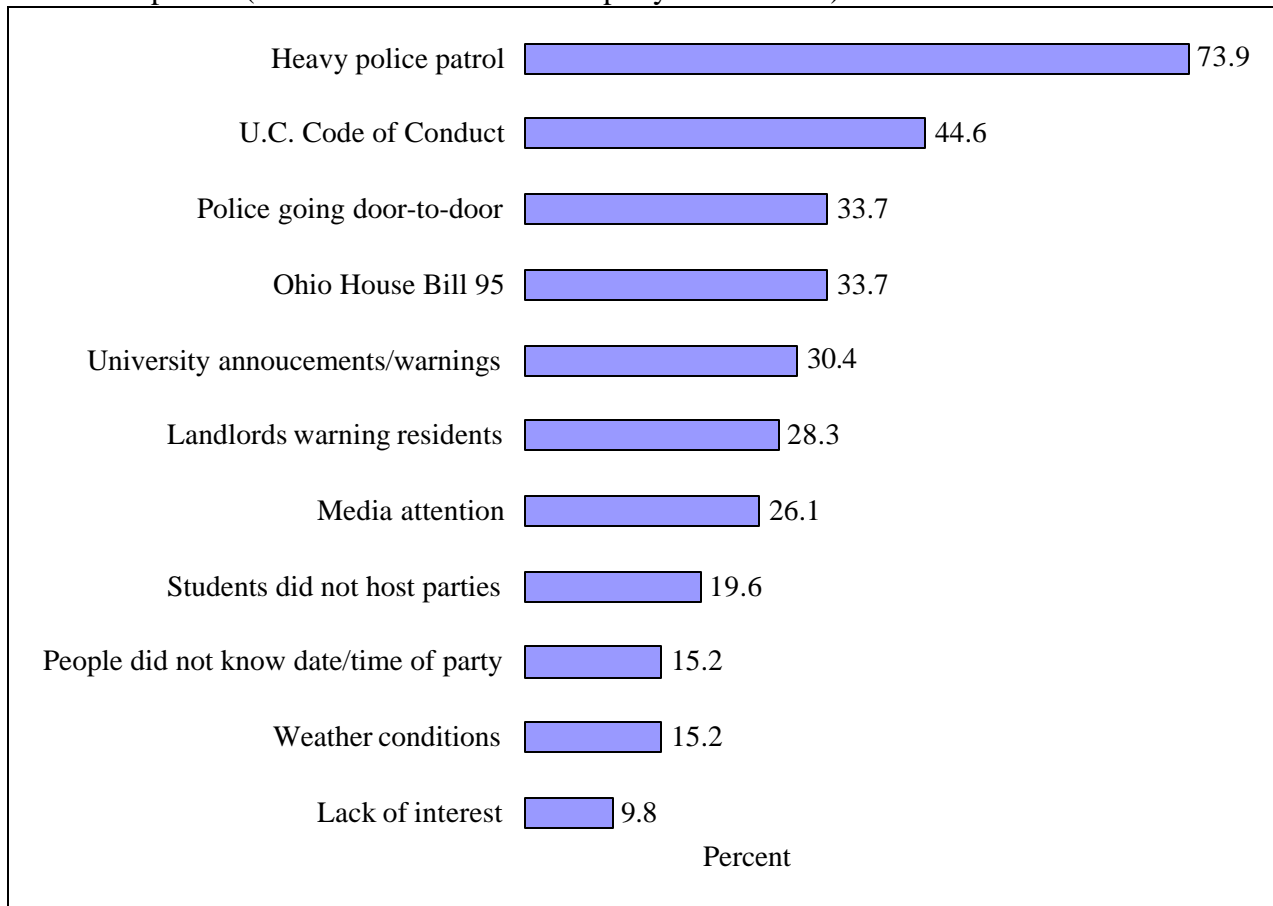
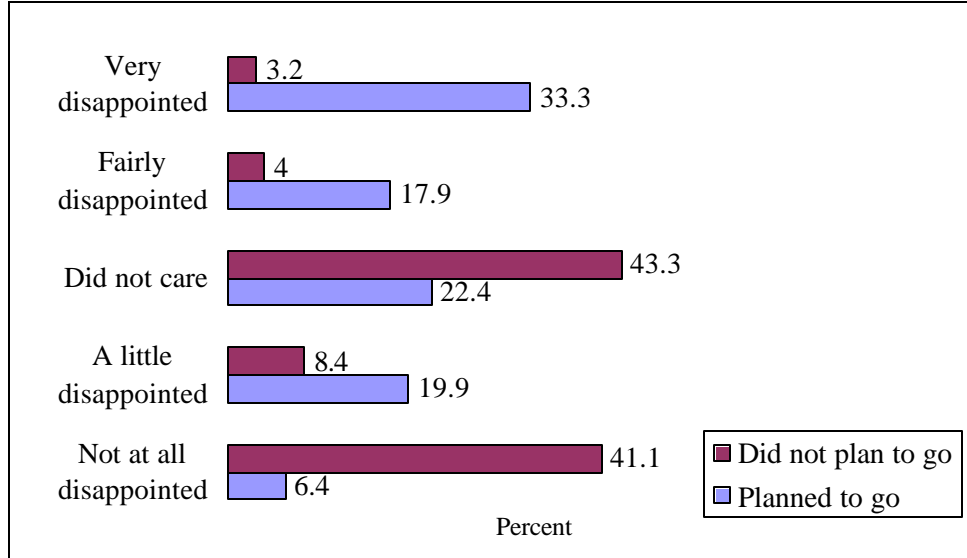


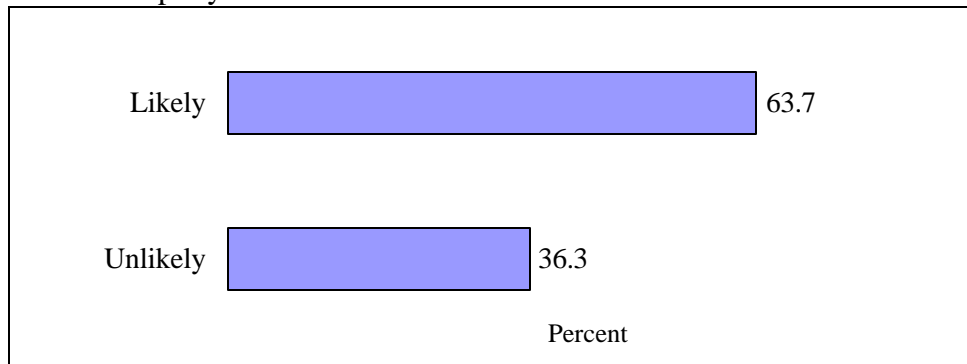
Figure 9. Students feelings toward the absence of a large 2004 Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford



Student Projections For Cinco de Mayo in 2005

Finally, students were asked about the possibility of another Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford in the spring of 2005. The majority of students (63.7%) believe that a large 2005 Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford is more likely to occur than not (see Figure 10).

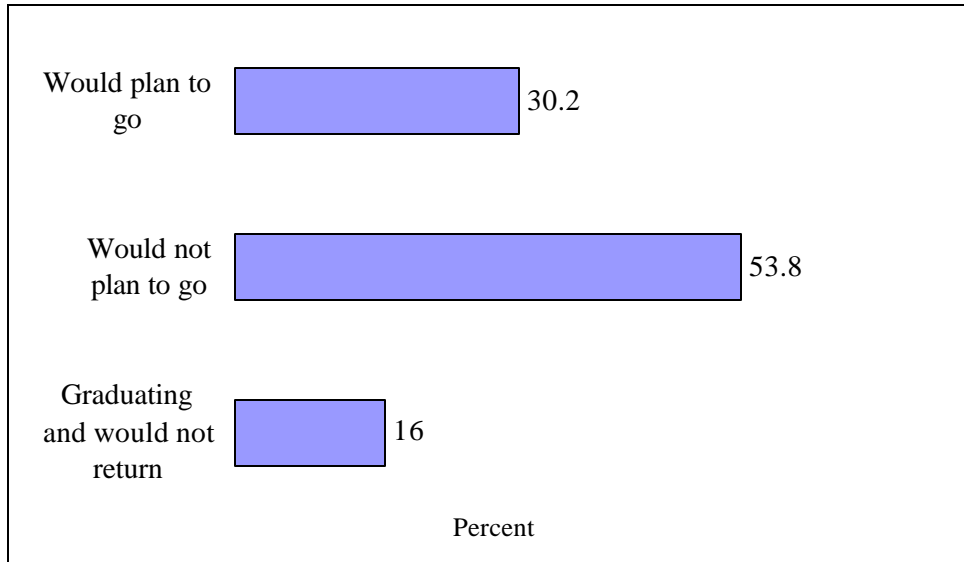
Figure 10. Students perception of the likelihood of a large 2005 Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford



Additionally, slightly more than 30 percent (n = 368) of the students who responded to the survey said they would plan to go if a Cinco de Mayo street party is held on Stratford in 2005 (see Figure 11). This number does not include incoming freshman, transfer students, or non-

U.C. students, nor does it represent the entire U.C. student body. Therefore, this figure may be considered a conservative estimate of the number of U.C. students who will be interested in attending the event next year.

Figure 11. Likelihood of attending a large Cinco de Mayo street party on Stratford if held in 2005



Appendix A

Figure 12. Type of housing

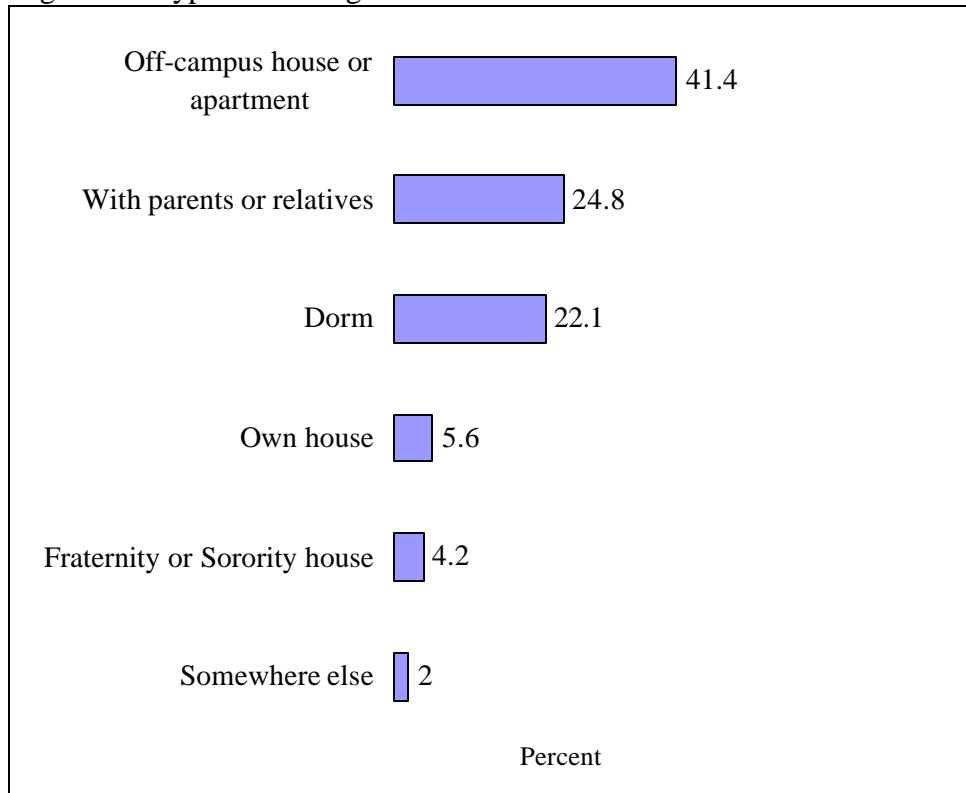


Figure 13. Live in a neighborhood within walking distance

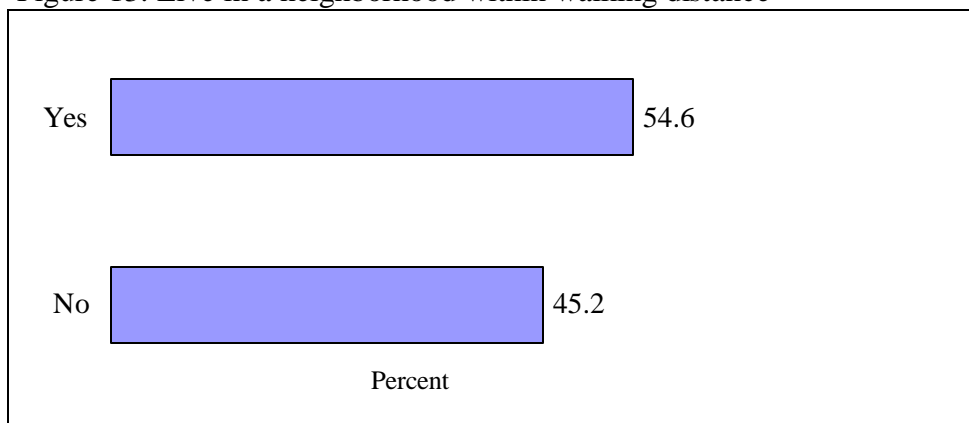


Figure 14. Member of social fraternity or sorority

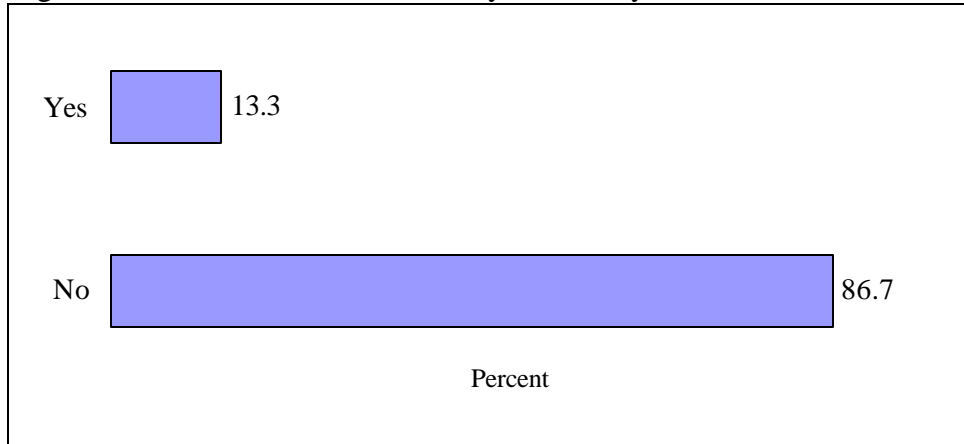


Figure 15. Member of a university-sponsored sports team

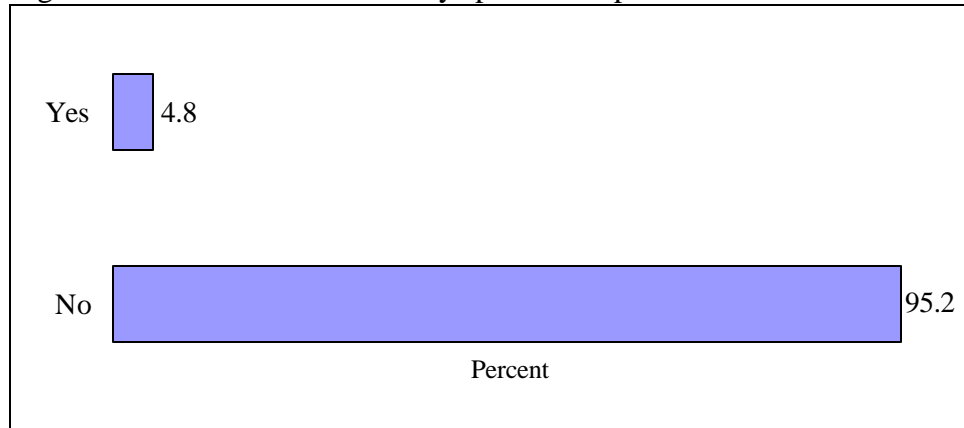


Figure 16. Sex

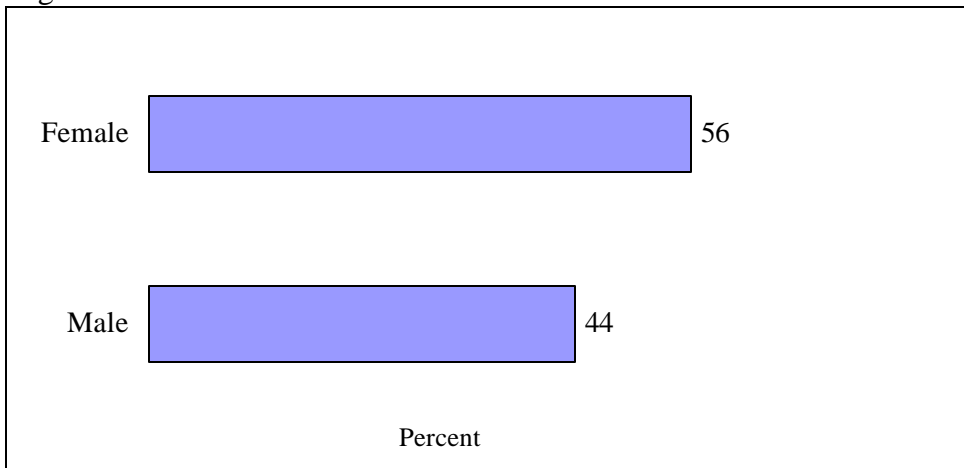


Figure 17. Class standing

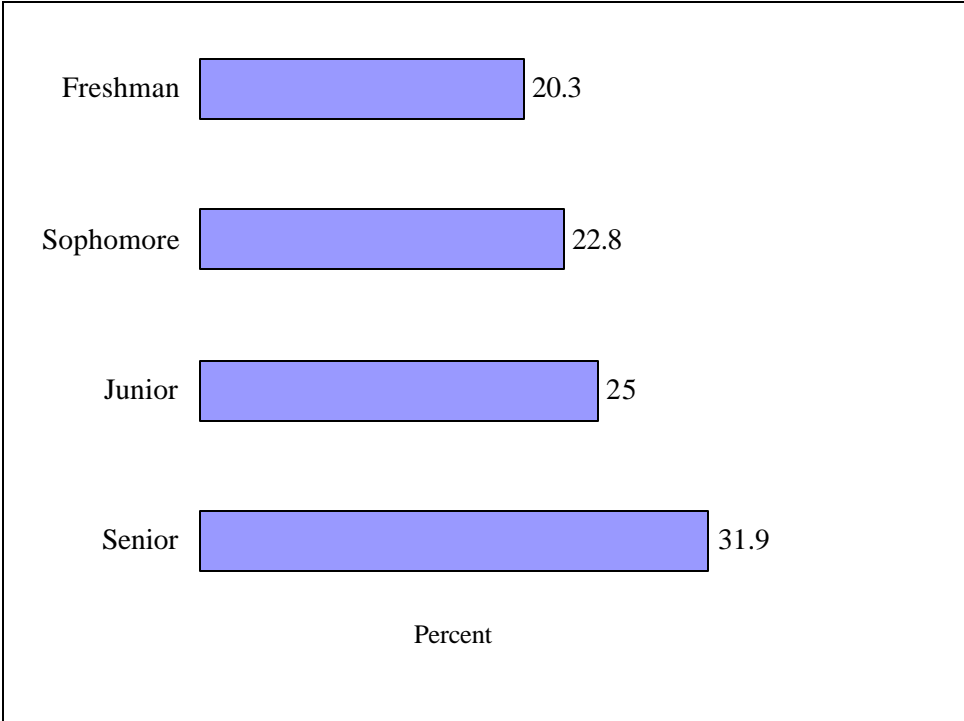


Figure 18. Enrollment status

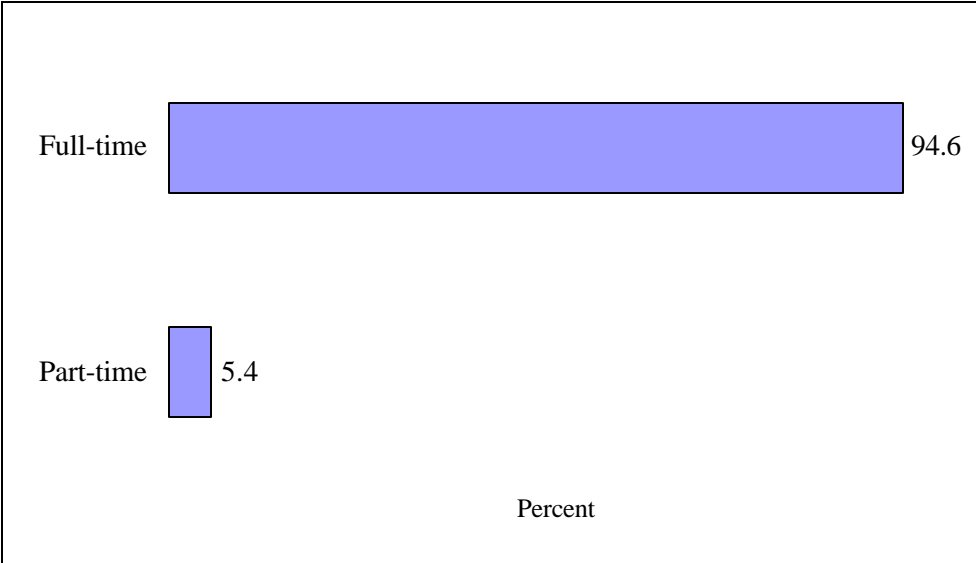


Figure 19. Race

