

Report of the Campus Coalition on Alcohol Spring 2005

The problem of alcohol abuse represents one of the most serious threats to the health and safety of students and to Hamilton's pursuit of academic excellence. To help in our ongoing efforts to address this problem, President Stewart appointed the Coalition on Alcohol and Other Drugs in September 2003. Following through on our report of March 2004, there have been a number of steps taken to begin to address some of the problems related to alcohol abuse. For example:

1. A committee of students, staff, and faculty appointed by the Alcohol Coalition has developed a point system for judicial violations. Though this measure is not a means of increasing sanctions on students and the allocation of points is designed to mirror current enforcement, we believe that it will help clarify current disciplinary policy.
2. Alcohol EDU is now required for all first year students. Students who fail to complete the program will be penalized when pre-registering for spring courses in November.
3. The First Year Forum will be mandatory beginning with the class of 2009.
4. All students intending to have a car on campus next year were required to attend a lecture on drunk driving before receiving parking permits. 720 students attended the lecture on May 3, 2005. Only 29 students registered to park and currently on campus did not attend the lecture. 237 students currently off-campus will attend in the fall. The response from students has been positive. They found the speaker to be "sobering."
5. An annual review process for Greek societies is underway and will be fully implemented at the beginning of the fall semester. Each society is asked to evaluate its success based upon the ideals set forth in their constitution or charter.

In spring of 2004 the Coalition also called on Hamilton students to address the negative consequences associated with alcohol abuse. In our report, we wrote:

"We challenge students to reduce vandalism costs by 50%. In addition, we challenge students to significantly decrease incidents of disruptive and destructive behaviors, and abusive and disrespectful treatment of campus safety officers and resident advisors.

If these goals are not accomplished, the Coalition will urge the President to enact more severe policy and enforcement measures."

After monitoring these indicators over the course of the year, the Coalition has seen no significant progress toward these goals. As a consequence, the Coalition recommends implementing the following measures for the fall 2005.

1. Increased penalties for vandalism.

Separate from the implementation of the point system, we also recommend that beginning in the fall of 2005, **students found responsible for vandalism will be suspended from the college.** An exception will be made for students who turn themselves in immediately. Students who do so will be assessed no less than 6 points and will be required to pay twice the cost of the repair for the damage they caused, up to \$1000 with a \$100 minimum fine. The Dean of Students will send an all-campus e-mail on Monday mornings noting vandalism that occurred over the weekend and asking students to provide information about the persons responsible.

2. Installation of security cameras in public areas.

To help deter vandalism and to identify the individuals responsible for such damage, we recommend that the College begin placing security cameras in public areas of the campus where needed (e.g. North Lot, Beinecke, Martin's Way). Students found responsible would be subject to suspension.

3. Increased enforcement of existing College regulations.

The Coalition recommends that the College step up its enforcement of existing policies, especially those related to alcohol. The Coalition believes that more rigorous enforcement, even for relatively minor violations like carrying an open container or underage drinking, will begin to change the alcohol culture at Hamilton. Lax enforcement of minor violations creates an environment where some students might think that the College condones or encourages drinking. Furthermore, students who receive 1 or 2 points for a minor violation will be more likely to weigh the consequences of any future misbehavior.

4. A streamlined process for handling minor violations

As part of increased enforcement of existing regulations, we recommend that minor violations be handled administratively. A Campus Safety officer or member of the Residential Life Staff will give any student caught in such a violation a written notification. Students then have 2 business days to appeal this penalty. Students who do not appeal or have their appeals denied will automatically receive disciplinary points. If, however, these additional points would cause a student to exceed 6 points (probation) or 10 points (suspension), the student may appeal the violation to the Judicial Board.

5. Begin a process of linking academic and social behavior to housing and parking assignments.

Many students have suggested the creation of incentives for good behavior in the areas of parking and housing. Next fall, the coalition will begin discussions about ways to create such incentives.

We hope that these measures will encourage greater student responsibility. Over the next year, the Alcohol Coalition will continue to monitor this issue and will recommend taking any additional measures necessary for a safe and responsible campus environment.

Campus Coalition on Alcohol – 2004/2005

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