

Report of the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate

November 1, 1999

**Bhavik M. Bhandari, Co-Chair
David J. Singer, Co-Chair
Student Affairs Committee**

Submitted in response to Senate Charge S-9907: “Review and discuss the March 1999 Report of the Committee to Change the Culture of College Drinking, prioritize all 43 of the report’s recommendations, and separately recommend priority sequence for implementing the report’s seven newly recommended policy statements.”

Overview

In January 1998, President Francis L. Lawrence formed a committee to review Rutgers’ existing alcohol policy, which was adopted in 1984. The committee was charged with the task of examining and assessing current policy concerning alcohol use among all members of the Rutgers community. The Alcohol Policy Committee, chaired by Dr. Robert J. Pandina, director of the University’s Center of Alcohol Studies, was convened in February 1998. In the Spring 1999 semester, the committee produced a comprehensive report which was submitted to President Lawrence. The Alcohol Policy Committee endorsed the current alcohol policy articulated by the Board of Governors in 1981 and concluded that the current programs appropriate responses to alcohol use and related problems among citizens of the university community. In addition, the committee developed seven new policy statements intended to enhance the existing alcohol policy and to extend current program efforts. The committee also offered 43 specific recommendations keyed to the new policy statements.

In April 1999, the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate was asked by President Lawrence to review and discuss the March 1999 Report of the Committee to Change the Culture of College Drinking. Additionally, The Student Affairs Committee was charged with recommending a priority sequence for implementing the report’s seven newly recommended policy statements and all 43 of the reports specific recommendations. The Student Affairs Committee convened in October 1999, co-chaired by Senators Bhavik Bhandari and David Singer of Cook College. Committee membership included 23 students, faculty, and administrators. As a committee, we decided to break down the seven alcohol policy statements into three tiers. This was done under the assumption that more than one policy statement can be implemented at one time. We sequenced the implementation as follows:

Implementation Sequence

TIER 1:

Policy Statement 1: The university should maintain its ongoing commitment to assessing alcohol use and related problems, and should enhance its commitment to responsive programmatic activities. As a committee we felt that it was essential to have a standing committee on alcohol policy in place to implement and assess any problems with implementation. This policy we felt could be initiated immediately and serve as the backbone for all future alcohol-related issues. The specific recommendations are ranked as follows: 1, 2, 5, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 8.

Policy Statement 6: The university should explore methods for enhancing, campus-centered activities that would heighten the sense of “local community.” As a committee we felt that without activities other than alcoholic ones, the policy would not succeed. This is a key issue for the students at the university. Enhancing programmatic activities sponsored by student-run organizations by cutting back restrictions, and making planning for events easier by cutting the red tape will certainly be of great significance to heighten the sense of “local community.” The specific recommendations are ranked as follows: 1, 4, 3, 2, 7, 8, 9, 5, 6, 10.

TIER 2:

Policy Statement 2: The university should assure that prevention efforts extend to the entire campus community. The specific recommendations are ranked as follows: 1, 2, 5, 10, 7, 6, 8, 9, 4, 3.

Policy Statement 4: The university should enhance current education and training opportunities for all members of the community. The specific recommendations are ranked as follows: 2, 1.

Policy Statement 5: The university should continue and enhance its existing system of intervention services. The specific recommendations are ranked as follows: 3, 1, 2, 4.

Policy Statement 3: The university should provide clear information about consistent enforcement of alcohol policies and related procedures. The specific recommendations are ranked as follows: 1, 3, 2, 4, 6, 5.

We believe that once a standing committee on alcohol policy is established, and non-alcoholic activity alternatives are provided, the committee could implement these four policy statements concurrently. We listed the policy statements in the order that seemed most logical and efficient to the committee, and that provided the greatest benefit to the university community as a whole. Education, prevention, intervention and enforcement are all critical parts to building a heightened sense of “local community.”

TIER 3:

Policy Statement 7: The university should develop a coordinated program of research focusing on alcohol use and related issues in the campus community. Although the committee felt that research was an important part of the policy, we felt the other six could be implemented on the short term, while research is a long-term focus. We also felt that this policy would not have the impact on the campus communities that the prior six policies would have. The specific recommendations are ranked as follows: 1, 2.

Conclusion

The University Senate Student Affairs Committee feels that each policy statement, along with its specific recommendations, is of great importance to the concept of changing the culture of drinking at Rutgers University. In addition, we feel that when these changes are implemented, Rutgers will be able to provide the community with an alcohol policy which stresses education, prevention, intervention, and enforcement and provides for responsive, flexible, and effective programming. We suggest that a implementation timeline be set for these recommendations and the Student Affairs Committee be notified of all progress.