

Comprehensive Substance Abuse Plan Gains Ground

In spring 1999, the Chancellor's Commission on Substance Abuse Prevention and Campus Security launched an initiative aimed at reducing the use of alcohol and other drugs in the campus community. In May, the initiative—SU's 12-Point Plan for Substance Abuse Prevention and Health Enhancement—received a 1999 Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Programs Award from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention in collaboration with the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, the National Prevention Network, and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

"This comprehensive strategy draws on the best practices of alcohol and other drug prevention, education, and intervention programming, and includes research and evaluation components," says Barry L. Wells, vice president for student affairs and dean of student relations. "We made a concerted effort to be a national leader in addressing alcohol and other drug issues. This recognition is a welcome validation of our vision and our environmental management approach."

Wells, the commission chair, developed the plan with a long-term strategy in mind. Implemented by the Division of Student Affairs' Substance Abuse Prevention and Health Enhancement (SAPHE) Office and Office of Judicial Affairs, the initiative:

- strengthens and expands intervention programs for students who need help changing their behavior;
- expands University-wide educational campaigns designed to increase students' understanding of the effects of alcohol and other drugs (AOD);
- assesses environmental factors contributing to or promoting alcohol and other substance abuse;
- promotes programs incorporating alcohol education into academic settings, such as curriculum infusion;
- expands peer-based initiatives that encourage students to become educators, advisors, workshop leaders, and mentors in AOD prevention efforts;
- trains faculty, staff, and student lead-

ers in basic skills for preventing and intervening in AOD issues;

- expands the existing support services that identify and help students with AOD problems;
- allocates additional staffing and resources to ongoing efforts to deal with AOD issues;
- institutes and enforces policies and procedures to prevent illegal or abusive alcohol behavior;
- discourages substance abuse by consistently enforcing all campus policies and local and federal laws regarding AOD;
- continually assesses AOD issues, student use, and effectiveness of AOD programs; and
- works with a neighboring residential and business community coalition to confront AOD problems and develop prevention strategies benefiting all parties.

Among changes brought about by the plan were a new Policy on Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Tobacco, and a restructuring of the University Judicial System (UJS), which provide for more clearly delineated standard sanctions for substance abuse-related violations. "These standard sanctions establish clear consequences for specific policy violations related to alcohol and other drugs," Wells says.

Changes were made in the UJS to ensure consistent outcomes of cases and student referrals to campus-based educational and therapeutic resources; improve student knowledge of acceptable behavior and the consequences of misconduct; and inform parents of violations so that they could be involved in helping the student succeed, Wells says. One program established for students facing serious or repeated violations is Options, a short-term counseling and education program that helps students confront substance abuse. "Options encourages students to be honest with themselves, set their own goals, and modify their behavior," says Dessa Bergen-Cico '86, G'88, G'92, director of the SAPHE Office.

Recent UJS statistics indicate the 12-Point Plan is having a positive impact. While alcohol violations remain the most com-

mon reason students are referred to UJS, student misconduct fell by 49.5 percent (from 541 cases to 273) between the middle and end of the fall semester. During the same period, student misconduct cases involving alcohol decreased by 55.8 percent, from 396 cases to 175. This downward trend is notable, Wells says, because during the past five years, student misconduct increased in the second half of each semester.

In the future, the commission plans to focus on improving recreational and leisure opportunities for students. SU continues to offer "Late Night at the Gym," a student-developed program initiated in fall 1998; transportation and discounted skiing packages in conjunction with a local ski venue; and a weekly on-campus dance club. In addition, the University expects to have its new ice-skating pavilion open in the fall, and is working with local officials and merchants to attract new businesses and services to the Marshall Street area.

The commission also plans to provide comprehensive education about alcohol and other drugs to students. "The commission is investigating which strategies would be most effective in reaching residential students, off-campus students, first-year students, fraternity and sorority students, and student athletes," Wells says. "We are also interested in determining strategies to bring alcohol and other drug education into the classroom. We look forward to engaging the Syracuse University community in a thoughtful dialogue on the commission's recommendations."

—FROM STAFF REPORTS

correction

In the Spring 2000 issue, a profile on Walter Broadnax G'75 contained incorrect information about his Syracuse University degree. Broadnax received a Ph.D. from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in 1975.