



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

CORNELIUS KERWIN
PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

October 19, 2007

TO: Campus Community
FROM: Neil Kerwin, President
SUBJECT: National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week

The week of October 22–26 is National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week (NCAAW). It is a time for higher education institutions to reflect on the use of alcohol in a community of learners and to ask hard questions about what we are doing to ensure that our campus is a healthy environment where students can grow and develop as responsible, productive citizens.

A summary of research prepared by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov) paints an alarming portrait of student life. Nationally, approximately 1,700 college students die each year because of alcohol-related injuries, almost 600,000 are injured while under the influence of alcohol, and more than 97,000 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape. At AU, almost two-thirds of the violations of the Student Conduct Code last year were alcohol-related. On average, 30 AU students are transported to the hospital every year for alcohol-related conditions.

Binge drinking has a negative effect on our entire campus community. Students who drink irresponsibly are more likely to perform poorly in their classes and to place themselves at serious risk of injury or death. They also subject others to their inconsiderate and sometimes intimidating and disruptive behavior. We all share responsibility for altering this dangerous and troubling aspect of campus life.

During National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week, there will be a number of programs that contribute to our ongoing efforts to address the irresponsible use of alcohol in our campus culture. I encourage you to attend the NCAAW keynote address by Ross Szabo on Monday, October 22, at 8:15 p.m. in Bender Arena. Ross is an AU alumnus who has won accolades for his outstanding presentations on college campuses nationally. His talk, entitled *Mixed Drinks, Mixed Emotions*, will address alcohol abuse and its connection to depression. The Center for Teaching Excellence will also offer a noontime conversation for faculty (*Drinking on a Dry Campus*) when panelists and participants will discuss the impact of students' alcohol use on the classroom experience. Faculty should call x3904 or e-mail [CTE](mailto:CTE@american.edu) to reserve a place (October 24, Mary Graydon Center 5, noon to 1:30 p.m., lunch included).

More information about this important issue and activities during NCAAW is available through the Office of the Dean of Students (x3300) and on the Dean of Students' Web site (www.american.edu/ocl/dos). The Counseling Center Web site (www.american.edu/ocl/counseling) has a resource page which includes a confidential online screening as well as listings of helpful materials and services. The Student Health Center offers medical assistance and referrals for students and information about health education programs through the Wellness Center (www.american.edu/ocl/healthcenter). I urge members of the campus community to refer students at risk to these resources.

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