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Harvard study shows binge drinking part of college life

BOSTON (AP) — More college students are living in substance-free residence halls, and fewer recall drinking to excess while in high school. Yet binge drinking on college campuses is still as common as it was in the early 1990s, a new Harvard study shows.

The survey by the Harvard School of Public Health found 44 percent of college students admitted binge drinking within the previous two weeks — the same percentage found in a 1993 study.

"It's part of the American college culture," Nicholas Pasquale, 20, a sophomore at Boston University, said Sunday. "I don't know of any college where a large part of the student body isn't drinking on weekends."

However, the survey also found that universities had made efforts over the past decade to change that culture.

About 65 percent more college students said they were living in substance-free residence halls and being exposed to alcohol awareness education. Also, fewer students said they were members of fraternities and sororities, where reported binge drinking rates have been the highest. A growing number of students said they abstain from drinking altogether — 19.3 percent, up from 16.4 percent eight years ago.

Kelilah Miller, 19, a Boston University freshman, said she does not hang around with people who drink and questioned how much of a public health issue binge drinking is.

"What's society's responsibility to protect people from themselves?" she asked.

The Harvard survey questioned 10,000 students at 119 four-year colleges, and defined binge drinking as four or more drinks in a row for women, or five or more for men.

Out of the traditional college students who drink — 18- to 23-year-olds not living with their parents — seven out of 10 said they had met that definition of binge drinking in the past 30 days.

"That's a staggering number," said Henry Wechsler, director of College Alcohol Studies at Harvard School of Public Health and lead investigator on the study.

"Before, we didn't see positive trends at the same time as

the continuation of the binge rate," Wechsler said Friday. "We didn't see this kind of illogical presence of trends that should lead to lower rates and continuing high rate."

"This, to us, indicates that strong forces are continuing to support this level of drinking on campus," he said. "Those forces need to be addressed, policies that colleges take."

The University of Vermont in Burlington, one of 10 colleges taking part in an American Medical Association-led initiative to curb binge drinking, found when it joined the program in 1997 that 65 percent of all students admitted binge drinking, said Andrew Flewelling, director of the university's program. That number is now at 64 percent.

Flier

Continued from page 1

interest of student government or class councils," Sarandis said.

All candidates must submit their campaign materials to the commission for approval. Dubberly alleged the practice is a blatant violation of candidates' free speech rights, and refused to take down his fliers.

"They (election commission) knew what they were doing was unlawful," Dubberly said.

Sarandis declined to discuss why she reversed her decision, but said she was satisfied with Dubberly's explanation of why the flier's content was not inappropriate.

"It's an ongoing process," Sarandis said. "If candidates feel that certain fines were unfair, they can always come talk to me and we'll work through it."

More than 30 of the 125 candidates in the student election have submitted campaign material with inappropriate content, Sarandis said. Dubberly is the only candidate to have fines dropped and previously censored campaign material approved

without having to revise the flier's content, Sarandis said.

The leaflet in question contains the text "Who's your daddy? Me. And I make damn cool t-shirts. Pimpin' for the best damn

"I hope other candidates stand up against this censorship and that they change this rule for future Aggies."

— Shannon Dubberly
2004 Vice President candidate

Bonfire

Continued from page 1

of the student body as possible when finding something the students will accept, she said.

She hopes to give students a chance to speak at forums and have representatives on a committee to work with student leaders in finding an activity that will build leadership.

"Bonfire has definitely left a hole on our campus, and it's important to fill that, not with another tradition, but with activities that can build leadership and provide the meaning that was behind Bonfire," Pringle said.

SBP candidate Zac Coventry plans to do whatever he can to work actively for the safe return of the tradition to Texas A&M. He said he under-

stands from experience what Bonfire was and what it represented from working on the stack.

"I am absolutely passionate about the Fightin' Texas Aggie Bonfire," Coventry said. "It represents the undying spirit that all Aggies have for Texas A&M."

The possible initial return of Bonfire may not be exactly what students remember or are hoping for, but Coventry believes that the process will be one of give-and-take, making a reference to playing dominoes. You don't win in one hand, he said, you get a little bit at a time.

The best opportunity to bring back Bonfire will be to start with a clean slate and remake the tradition, said Coventry, a senior agricultural development major. He hopes

to involve a greater number of students from throughout the A&M student body.

Although students and student government working together will be essential in reviving the tradition, the new University president, along with the administration, will play a key role in the future of Bonfire, Coventry said.

"I think we need to wait and see who the new administration is and then adapt to that and decide our approach," he said.

Coventry is excited about the possibility of Bonfire's return in 2003 and has collaborated with current and former students about ways to reduce the risk factor by using safer methods. For 2002, however, he has come up with a competition he calls the "Old Army Bonfire Skills Challenge."

campaign materials, leaving the election commissioner with complete discretion to determine what is appropriate.

Dubberly said the commission's decision underscores the unfairness and arbitrary nature of the campaign rules. Media attention and public pressure forced the commission to do the right thing, Dubberly said, but the commission continues to violate the free speech rights of other candidates.

"I hope other candidates stand up against this censorship and that they change this rule for future Aggies," Dubberly said.

Dubberly said he had been contacted by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawyers who offered to file an injunction in federal court to prevent the election commission from disqualifying him, and added that the ACLU stood ready to defend other candidates who wanted to challenge the election commission's censorship.

The issues raised by this controversy may prompt the student senate to examine and consider revising the election rules, Sarandis said.

Student elections will be held March 27-28.

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY STUDENT MEDIA BOARD IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR

**Editor
THE BATTALION**
— Including radio and online editions —

Summer 2002
(The summer editor will serve May 27 through Aug. 12, 2002)

Fall 2002
(The fall editor will serve Aug. 19 through Dec. 13, 2002)

Qualifications for editor in chief of *The Battalion* are:

- Be a Texas A&M student in good standing with the University and enrolled in at least six credit hours (4 if a graduate student) during the term of office (unless fewer credits are required to graduate);
- Have at least a 2.00 cumulative grade point ratio (3.00 if a graduate student) and at least a 2.00 grade point ratio (3.00 if a graduate student) in the semester immediately prior to the appointment, the semester of appointment and semester during the term of office. In order for this provision to be met, at least six hours (4 if a graduate student) must have been taken for that semester;
- Have completed JOUR 301 (Mass Communication, Law and Society), or equivalent;
- Have at least one year experience in a responsible editorial position on *The Battalion* or comparable daily college newspaper, —OR— Have at least one year editorial experience on a commercial newspaper, —OR— Have completed at least 12 hours journalism, including JOUR 203 and 303 (Media Writing I and II), and JOUR 304 (Editing for the Mass Media), or equivalent.

**Editor
AGGIELAND**
2003

Qualifications for editor in chief of the *Aggieldand* yearbook are:

- Be a Texas A&M student in good standing with the University and enrolled in at least six credit hours (4 if a graduate student) during the term of office (unless fewer credits are required to graduate);
- Have at least a 2.00 cumulative grade point ratio (3.00 if a graduate student) and at least a 2.00 grade point ratio (3.00 if a graduate student) in the semester immediately prior to the appointment, the semester of appointment and semester during the term of office. In order for this provision to be met, at least six hours (4 if a graduate student) must have been taken for that semester;
- Have completed JOUR 210 (Graphics) and JOUR 301 (Mass Communication, Law and Society), or equivalent;
- Have demonstrated ability in writing through university coursework or equivalent experience;
- Have at least one year experience in a responsible position on the *Aggieldand* or comparable college yearbook.

Application forms should be picked up and returned to Francia Cagle, Student Media business coordinator, in Room 014A Reed McDonald Building. Deadline for submitting application: noon Wednesday, April 3, 2002. Applicants will be interviewed during the Student Media Board Meeting beginning at 2 p.m. Friday, April 5, 2002, in room 221F Reed McDonald.

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