



# *A Safer Community*

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## Virginia Tech's Plan to Reduce High-Risk Drinking and Its Negative Consequences

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November 9, 1998

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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HIGH-RISK DRINKING THREATENS THE LIVES, HEALTH, SAFETY, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS EVERYWHERE. IT IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM AT VIRGINIA TECH BECAUSE THE RATES OF HIGH-RISK DRINKING AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL ABUSE ARE BOTH HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGES. BOTH STUDENTS WHO DRINK AND THOSE WHO DO NOT ARE AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL ABUSE. BOTH STUDENTS WHO DRINK AND THOSE WHO DO NOT ARE KILLED IN ALCOHOL-RELATED ACCIDENTS.

VIRGINIA TECH IS ALREADY SPONSORING MANY PROGRAMS TO EDUCATE STUDENTS, OFFER ALCOHOL-FREE ACTIVITIES, ENFORCE POLICY, AND INTERVENE WHEN STUDENTS HAVE PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, OUR PROBLEM PERSISTS, SO MORE MUST BE DONE. THIS PLAN WAS CREATED WITH BROAD INPUT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TO RESPOND TO THIS PROBLEM. THE GOAL IS TO REDUCE HIGH-RISK DRINKING AND ITS NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR VIRGINIA TECH.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Continue to emphasize the centrality of academic work in university life.
2. Publicize existing alcohol-free activities.
3. Expand opportunities for alcohol-free recreational activities.
4. Provide additional funding for alcohol-free activities.
5. Reward students who create alcohol-free activities.
6. Support student-led efforts to reduce drunk driving.
7. Adopt a *Positive Social Norms* approach toward alcohol education.
8. Expand skill-based training.
9. Take university judicial action for off-campus alcohol violations resulting in summons or arrest.
10. Notify parents of students under age 21 for alcohol and other drug violations resulting in deferred suspension or suspension.
11. Re-emphasize the risk management policy for Greek organizations.
12. Provide an intensive educational sanction for alcohol violators, at their expense.
13. Use standard research methods to assess change in high-risk drinking and negative consequences.
14. Report assessment results annually to the entire university community.
15. Hire a Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs to oversee the implementation of this plan.
16. Hire an additional judicial officer to handle off-campus judicial referrals.
17. Provide sustained additional funding for alcohol education programs, alcohol-free activities, enhanced enforcement, increased interventions, and on-going assessment.

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## INTRODUCTION

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High-risk drinking threatens the lives, health, safety, and academic success of college students. National attention was focused on this issue in 1997 because students at Louisiana State University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Virginia, Radford University, and Virginia Tech died of alcohol poisoning or alcohol-related falls or drunken car crashes within a very short period. Three Virginia Tech students died within four hours on Halloween night in alcohol-related accidents.

The terrible cost that high-risk drinking exacts in the lives of students is not limited to these tragic and very public events. When college students drink heavily they are more likely to be injured, to make unwise choices about sex, to miss class, to perform poorly on tests, and to receive lower grades. When college students drink heavily they also impact the students around them. The second-hand consequences of drinking include interrupted sleep, inability to study, fights, property damage, assault, date rape, and death. High-risk drinking undermines the academic mission of a university even when the glare of public attention is not shining on the problem.

In July 1998, the *Attorney General's Task Force on Drinking by College Students* called on all colleges and universities in Virginia to develop a plan to address alcohol abuse. This document represents Virginia Tech's response to that call. More importantly, this plan responds to a serious and widespread problem that compromises the lives of Virginia Tech students on a daily basis.

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**EVIDENCE THAT HIGH-RISK DRINKING IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM AT VIRGINIA TECH**

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- **This is a serious problem at Virginia Tech because the rate of high-risk drinking is higher than the national average.** More than half of Virginia Tech’s students (54%) report that they drink five or more drinks at a sitting at least once in a two-week period. The national average for all college students is 39%.
- **High-risk drinking is a serious problem at Virginia Tech because the rate of negative consequences for students who drink is higher than the national average.**

<b>Negative Consequence</b>	<b>National Average</b>	<b>Virginia Tech Students</b>
Memory Loss	27%	39%
Miss Class	29%	42%
Be hurt or injured	13%	18%
Get into a fight	29%	34%
Drive impaired	32%	38%

- **High-risk drinking is a serious problem at Virginia Tech because the rate of second-hand consequences of other students’ drinking is higher than the national average.** Even students who do not drink frequently or heavily are hurt, endangered, or disturbed by the alcohol-related behavior of students who drink heavily. As a result, Virginia Tech students are more likely than students elsewhere to experience a whole range of negative effects from other students’ drinking.

<b>Negative Effect of Others’ Drinking</b>	<b>National Average</b>	<b>Virginia Tech Students</b>
Have a serious argument	26%	42%
Be pushed, hit or assaulted	15%	23%
Have property damaged	13%	20%
‘Baby sit’ a drunk student	50%	70%
Have sleep or study interrupted	51%	77%
Experience unwanted sexual advance	23%	36%

- **Finally, high-risk drinking is a serious problem at Virginia Tech because the student culture of the campus disproportionately emphasizes heavy and frequent drinking and fails to recognize the values and interests of students who drink responsibly.** Forty-one percent of Virginia Tech students drink less than once a week, and 13% don’t drink at all.

Virginia Tech is already sponsoring many programs to educate students about the dangers of alcohol use, to provide alternate activities, to enforce the university alcohol policy, and to intervene with students who have problems with alcohol. Here are just a few examples:

- ◆ Virginia Tech is the first institution in the country to distribute the interactive CD-ROM *Alcohol 101* broadly by placing a copy in every residence hall room.
- ◆ At summer orientation all incoming students participate in a new discussion video in which Virginia Tech students discuss being jailed for being drunk in public and losing a friend in an alcohol-related car crash.
- ◆ Virginia Tech's Alcohol Awareness Week programs won national recognition in 1997.
- ◆ Virginia Tech offers wellness-oriented substance-free housing (The W.E.L.L.), which won national recognition last year as a model for supporting student learning.
- ◆ Alcohol emergency door hangers are distributed to all residence hall students.
- ◆ The *Friends Helping Friends* pledge campaign encourages students to provide positive support for each other in high-risk situations.
- ◆ Virginia Tech's sanctions for alcohol policy violations are among the strictest in the Commonwealth. Students are suspended for a second major offense or a third minor offense. Health education and counseling programs are part of the sanction.
- ◆ Virginia Tech's fraternities and sororities hold alcohol-free rush, and they operate under risk management policies that limit the opportunity for alcohol-related problems.
- ◆ More than 25,000 alcohol-free student-life activities are held at Virginia Tech each year, from the smallest student organization meeting to the largest concert.
- ◆ This fall Squires Student Center and the new recreation facilities in McComas Hall remain open until 2:00 A.M. on Friday and Saturday nights to provide alcohol-free recreation for students.

This list demonstrates that Virginia Tech is already actively working to curb high-risk drinking and to provide an atmosphere that supports students' healthy choices. A more complete list of current efforts is included in the appendix. However a serious problem still exists, so more must be done.

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## THE PLAN – AN OVERVIEW

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- **The goal of this plan is to reduce high-risk drinking and its consequences for Virginia Tech students.**

This goal properly identifies alcohol abuse as a public health issue. There is evidence from other universities that we can expect to reverse the current, negative trend within about three years and to see positive results within five years. Such results will require a sustained, comprehensive, campus-wide effort with additional resources. Recommendations for specific actions and required resources to meet this challenging timetable are included in this plan.

### *How This Plan Was Developed*

In August 1998 President Paul Torgersen charged Vice President for Student Affairs Landrum Cross with developing a plan to address alcohol abuse at Virginia Tech. The entire university community was invited to provide input. Vice President Cross solicited comments on key issues from the Commission on Student Affairs, the Vice President's Advisory Committee on Alcohol, the Panhellenic and Interfraternity Councils, the Residential and Dining Programs Student Advisory Committee, and others. On September 30, President Torgersen, Provost Peggy Meszaros, President of the Faculty Senate Kerry Redican, and Vice President Cross held an open forum for students, faculty, staff, and community members to voice their concerns and suggestions. This document reflects many of those comments.

### *How This Plan Relates to the Recommendations of the Attorney General's Task Force*

The Attorney General's Task Force on Drinking by College Students proposed 65 recommendations for colleges and universities, students, parents, law enforcement, the alcohol industry, alumni, and legislators. Virginia Tech already has in place some of the actions recommended by the task force. Some recommendations did not apply to Virginia Tech while others were adopted as part of this plan. This plan also includes ideas that were generated by the students, faculty, and staff of the university in addition to those proposed by the task force.

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## EDUCATION

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Alcohol education includes a broad spectrum of activities, from learning about alcohol to experiencing student life without alcohol. This section includes recommendations for changing the entire culture that supports high-risk drinking.

**1. Continue to emphasize the centrality of academic work in university life**

This fall President Torgersen sent a letter to all faculty members urging them to maintain high academic standards and to expect Friday class attendance. He also asked them to speak out about the alcohol problems of college students, to confront students they suspect of having alcohol problems, and to refer students for help when needed. Establishing clear expectations for high quality, sustained academic work is the responsibility of all faculty members, administrators, and leading students.

**2. Publicize existing alcohol-free activities**

Virginia Tech already provides facilities, technical support, and/or sponsorship for more than 25,000 alcohol-free student-life activities each year, ranging from the smallest student organization meeting to the largest concert. These are precisely the types of activities that appeal to students who prefer not to drink. However, students have reported that they are unaware of many of these activities. In response, University Unions and Student Activities has created a web page that lists activities each week and will publicize this through the *Collegiate Times* and other sources. The university should continue to seek ways to support students who prefer not to drink by highlighting the many alcohol-free activities that are available.

**3. Expand opportunities for alcohol-free recreational activities**

Students have reasonably requested the opportunity for activity at hours when bars are open and everything else is closed. In response, Squires Student Center and the recreational facilities of McComas Hall are now open until 2:00 A.M. on Friday and Saturday nights.

**4. Provide additional funding for alcohol-free activities**

Both students and the Attorney General's Task Force have made the point that additional alcohol-free activities are not possible without additional resources. The university should provide additional funding for these activities, in two different forms.

First, the Student Budget Board allocation for 1999-2000 should be increased to stimulate more and better alcohol-free student programs. The Budget Board will be asked to favor programs which would compete with drinking on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings.

Second, the university itself should provide activities, especially during the first few days and weeks of the fall semester, when new students are finding their way into the community and student organizations have not yet had time to plan activities for the year. In addition to increased Student Budget Board allocations, the university should establish a fund to support alcohol-free activities. This fund should be administered by University Unions and Student Activities and should be used both to provide grants for student organizations and to support operational costs for activities sponsored or co-sponsored by the university to compete with high-risk drinking.

**5. Reward students who create alcohol-free activities**

The Attorney General's Task Force calls on universities to create rewards for students to sponsor alcohol-free activities. This year the University Student Life Awards program and the Greek Awards will include new recognitions for students and student organizations that create successful alcohol education programs and alcohol-free social activities.

**6. Support student-led efforts to reduce drunk driving**

It is of particular concern that the rate of impaired driving among Virginia Tech students is now above the national average. The most common alcohol-related deaths are in drunken car crashes, and these frequently claim the lives of non-drinkers as well. In 1997-98, more Virginia Tech students died as the result of other people's drunk driving than as a result of the student's own drunk driving. This fall the Virginia Tech and Radford University student governments demonstrated leadership on this issue by placing a "don't drink and drive" message on a billboard on Route 114, the road between the two institutions where several students perished last year in alcohol-related accidents. Virginia Tech's Greek Councils also showed leadership by establishing a chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) this fall. Virginia Tech should support student-led designated driver programs emphasizing that a designated driver drinks only non-alcoholic drinks. Virginia Tech should also consider any student-led effort to extend public transportation service at the locations and times when drunk drivers are most likely to endanger their own lives and the lives of others.

## **7. Adopt a Positive Social Norms approach for alcohol education**

Virginia Tech has had an award-winning alcohol education program that includes traditional awareness activities and a new social marketing campaign focused on the consequences of high-risk drinking. A list of current educational activities is included in the appendix. To meet the goal of reducing high-risk drinking and its negative consequences within five years, however, will require a new approach. Evidence from other universities suggests that an intensive effort focused on positive social norms is most likely to succeed in changing the drinking culture. Marketing techniques are used to call attention to the number of students who limit drinking, refuse to drink and drive, refuse to ride with impaired drivers, and otherwise behave responsibly. This approach has the benefit of providing support for students who drink responsibly, and it encourages everyone to make thoughtful choices about alcohol.

## **8. Expand skill-based training**

Students who engage in high-risk drinking have been clear and convincing in their request for education programs focused on responsible drinking rather than prohibition. At the open forum many students, particularly those who identified themselves as members of fraternities and sororities, expressed a willingness to support this approach. As a supplement to positive social norms education, therefore, Virginia Tech will provide skill-based training such as T.I.P.S. (Training Intervention ProcedureS) to Greek organizations and to other student groups that request it. The T.I.P.S. program teaches students to recognize the signs of intoxication and intervene appropriately to prevent alcohol poisoning, drunk driving, and other negative consequences.

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## **ENFORCEMENT**

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Enforcement includes university judicial action against both individuals and organizations that violate university policy. Virginia Tech's current alcohol policy mirrors state law, and sanctions for violators are among the strictest in the Commonwealth. Students are suspended for a second major violation. Students who violate the alcohol policy at athletic events also lose the privilege to attend future games. For both major and minor offenses, students receive educational or counseling interventions in addition to judicial sanctions. Greek social organizations are subject to risk management policies that set high standards. Greek rush is alcohol-free. In the past Greek organizations have been suspended for violating university policy. In general, Virginia Tech's enforcement already meets or exceeds the recommendations of the Attorney General's Task Force. However, some changes are warranted.

**9. Take university judicial action for off-campus alcohol violations resulting in summons or arrest**

Virginia Tech has long asserted its authority to discipline both individual students and student organizations for violations of law and university policies on campus. However, most high-risk drinking occurs off campus at bars and private parties. The university has the authority to take judicial action for off-campus policy violations when there is a compelling university interest. To date such action has typically been reserved for violations involving weapons, illicit drugs, assault, and grand larceny. Given the serious public health and academic consequences of high-risk drinking, it is time for Virginia Tech to take university judicial action for off-campus alcohol violations as well, when these behaviors result in summons or arrest. Just as this authority is being extended off campus for individual alcohol violations, the university should now assert its authority to discipline a student organization whenever group alcohol violations off campus lead to summons or arrest. Group activity will be indicated whenever a reasonable observer would conclude from the evidence that the nature of the event, the number of members of one group, and/or significant involvement by leaders of the group make it a group activity.

Beginning spring 1999, Virginia Tech should accept information from the Blacksburg Police Department and local Alcohol Beverage Control agents about alcohol violations as university judicial referrals in the same way that reports from the Virginia Tech Police are now treated. In future years, this process should be extended to surrounding jurisdictions where cooperative agreements can be negotiated. The university should provide additional staff to handle the referrals.

**10. Notify parents of students under age 21 for major alcohol and other drug violations resulting in deferred suspension or suspension**

Recently passed legislation allows universities to notify the parents or guardians of students under 21 for alcohol and other drug violations. This exception to the privacy rights of students was enacted because of the health and safety consequences of alcohol and other drug abuse. At Virginia Tech these consequences are of particular concern when a student commits a major alcohol violation or a second minor violation and is placed on deferred suspension or suspension. (See the appendix for definitions of sanctions). Most parents would share the university's concern at this point for the student's health, safety, and academic progress. Beginning spring 1999, Virginia Tech should notify parents of students under 21 who are placed on deferred suspension or suspension for alcohol or other drug violations.

**11. Re-emphasize the risk management policy for Greek organizations**

The Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils at Virginia Tech currently operate under risk management policies that minimize the likelihood of negative consequences from drinking. Member organizations must adhere to this policy in order to be recognized by the university. Recent evidence suggests, however, that some organizations have not complied with this policy consistently. Beginning fall 1998, Greek Life staff will re-train all Greek organizations about the requirements of the risk management policy. The president and judicial chair of the Interfraternity Council have informed member organizations that violations of the policy will be treated even more seriously than in the past.

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**INTERVENTION**

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Virginia Tech provides individual assistance to students who have problems with alcohol. This intervention can be educational or counseling-based. Students who are found to violate the university's alcohol policy are now referred to an appropriate intervention as part of the judicial sanction. Other students are referred to these support systems as faculty and staff become aware of their alcohol-related problems. A list of current interventions is included in the appendix. However, one important form of intervention is currently not available at Virginia Tech, though it is offered at many other Virginia institutions.

**12. Provide an intensive educational sanction for alcohol violators, at their expense**

Most Virginia universities couple judicial sanctions with educational experiences that are lengthier and more intensive than those currently available at Virginia Tech. At some institutions students must also pay the cost of any educational programs to which they are sanctioned. Students and faculty have suggested that educational experience sanctions be expanded so that, depending on the severity of the case, students can be enrolled in a more structured, educational intervention program, similar to the VASAP Program connected with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. The university should create an intensive, structured educational program for some alcohol violators and require that they pay the costs for such a program.

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## ASSESSMENT

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This plan proposes a challenging, measurable goal: reduce high-risk drinking and its negative consequences for Virginia Tech students within five years. Progress toward this goal can be assessed both directly and indirectly.

**13. Use standard research methods to assess changes in high-risk drinking and negative consequences**

Virginia Tech faculty members are skilled in the research methods and data analysis necessary to determine whether significant change occurs in high-risk drinking and its negative consequences. There are appropriate ethical safeguards to protect students who complete surveys or volunteer to have their Blood Alcohol Content measured after a party. The assessment associated with this plan should meet the highest standards of research practice so that students and faculty can have confidence in the results.

**14. Report assessment results annually to the entire university community**

This plan proposes great changes in the lives of every member of the Virginia Tech community. It calls on the administration to commit additional resources and students to invest time and energy in alcohol-free activities and designated driver programs. Information about the outcomes of those changes properly belongs to everyone who is affected, including students and the local community. As regular assessments are conducted about high-risk drinking and its negative consequences, they should be reported broadly.

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## RESOURCES

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To reduce high-risk drinking and its negative consequences within five years, Virginia Tech must commit additional resources, including staff positions and operating dollars.

**15. Hire a Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs to oversee the implementation of this plan**

Virginia Tech should establish a new position reporting to the Vice President for Student Affairs to oversee implementation of this plan. Duties for this position would include leading education, enforcement, intervention, and assessment efforts campus-wide; chairing the Vice President's

Advisory Committee on Alcohol; establishing a continuing conversation with the Town of Blacksburg and other local communities about alcohol issues; and seeking external funding for substance abuse prevention programs.

**16. Hire an additional judicial hearing officer to handle off-campus judicial enforcement**

Virginia Tech currently employs one full-time judicial officer and assigns professional staff from other areas to serve part-time as hearing officers in addition to their other duties. This staffing is insufficient to handle the increased workload that will result with off-campus enforcement and parental notification.

**17. Provide sustained, additional funding for alcohol education programs, alcohol-free activities, enhanced enforcement, increased interventions, and on-going assessments**

Both students and the Attorney General’s Task Force have correctly pointed out that current funding is inadequate to accomplish the goals established in this document. Additional operating dollars will be required for each major element of this plan.

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**CONCLUSION**

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High-risk drinking kills and injures students. It compromises the quality of life. It diminishes both academic experience and career potential. High-risk drinking tears at the fabric of the university community. This plan calls on students and faculty to set new standards, to provide safe and entertaining out-of-class activities, and to restore the sense of academic purpose at the center of university life. No single action will change the current culture that supports high-risk drinking at Virginia Tech, but a sustained, comprehensive effort can create a safer university community for everyone.

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## APPENDIX – WHAT VIRGINIA TECH IS ALREADY DOING

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### *Campus-Wide Health Education Related to Alcohol and Other Drugs*

- **The “Catch the Wave” Poster Series** - These posters use information regarding the effects of high-risk drinking on the drinker and students who do not drink or drink heavily. The message is presented in a positive and humorous style.
- **“Friends Helping Friends” Pledge** - This is an intervention program designed to encourage students to care for each other. Participants pledge to help a friend or roommate to avoid troublesome situations that are high-risk for alcohol problems or sexual assault.
- **“Drinking at Virginia Tech” Pamphlet** - This eye-catching, colorful pamphlet, designed specifically for the Virginia Tech campus, focuses on the effects of high-risk drinking.
- **Alcohol Emergency Door Hanger** - The door hanger is distributed to hall residents to alert them to the responsibility involved in responding to alcohol emergencies.
- **Students in Crisis: A Faculty Response** - This handy guide provides tips to help faculty members intervene to help students with alcohol and sexual assault concerns.
- **Schiffert Health Center/Cook Counseling Center Alcohol Task Force** - The task force was established to develop an in-house response to students’ alcohol use. The group conducted a campus/community survey and a staff survey, and sponsored a Campus Hearing on Alcohol. These activities were components of a fact-gathering model designed to help the task force in its final report and recommendations.
- **Outreach Programs** - Interactive programs are presented in residence halls and to student organizations. The programs focus on negative consequences and intervention strategies.
- **On Campus Talking About Alcohol (OCTAA)** - A risk reduction/prevention program, available upon request.
- **The \$500 Alcohol-Free Challenge** - This program is designed to encourage student groups to sponsor alcohol-free events. Groups are awarded cash prizes for activities that best meet the criteria of the Challenge.

- **“Friends Helping Friends” Intervention Card** - Designed like a greeting card to help students confront their friends who may have drinking problems. For a student, this intervention card may be the first step in seeking help for a drinking problem.
- **Emergency Response Referral Letter** - Campus and community emergency response groups use this letter as a referral for students who have had an arrest, injury, or other alcohol-related incident.
- **“Controlled Drinking” Group** - In a small group setting students learn strategies to help control their own drinking.
- **Wellness Peer Education** - A group of students is trained to facilitate programs to help their peers make healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Wellness Promotion Team** - A group of students trained to sponsor health promotion and awareness events on campus. Events are designed around a prevention message specifically targeted at the college-aged population. Alcohol prevention activities are incorporated into many events.
- **“While You’re Away” Programs** - Student Affairs staff present programs on healthy lifestyle topics as requested by the academic faculty.

*Education within the Summer and Fall Orientation Programs*

- **Summer Orientation** – All incoming students see a new discussion piece called “VT Video.” Virginia Tech students talk about their personal experiences with alcohol, including arrest and the death of a friend. Student orientation leaders moderate frank discussions afterward.
- **Fall Orientation** – In early floor meetings, students are given information about alcohol, university policies, and the relationship between drinking behavior and academic success.
- **Orientation Web Page** – A new web page aimed at orienting new students to Virginia Tech contains information on alcohol and college students.
- **Alcohol 101** – This semester Virginia Tech began using this interactive CD-ROM to educate students on the effects of alcohol. *Alcohol 101* was purchased by the university and given free to all students living in residence halls and to all Greek chapters. The chapters were directed to include it in their new member education programs. Virginia Tech is the first institution to provide *Alcohol 101* broadly to students.

*Education Programs Focused in the Residence Halls*

- **Multi-faceted educational programs** – Residence hall staff provide bulletin boards, interactive programs, informal discussions, and follow-up conversations to judicial referrals.

*Education Programs Focused on the Greek System*

- **Risk Management Policies** – Both the Panhellenic and Interfraternity Councils have long-standing risk management policies that address alcohol and other drugs. The Greek Councils review these policies each semester and train all new members in their contents.
- **New Member Education** – The Greek Councils sponsor mandatory education seminars each semester for new members through the Thomas E. Cook Counseling Center. These seminars include instruction on alcohol, sexual assault, sexually transmitted diseases, and wellness.
- **Greek Peer Education Class** – Each semester the Greek Life staff teaches a credit-bearing course, EDHL 4964, entitled Greek Peer Education. During 1997-98, 118 students completed this course which includes information on alcohol, risk management, and related topics.
- **Stop, Look, and Listen Seminar** – Each semester the Greek Peer Educators lead this seminar, which is mandatory for new members. Content includes discussion of alcohol, risk management, hazing, sexual assault, and other issues.
- **Major Speakers** – Each semester the Greek system sponsors or co-sponsors at least one major speaker on alcohol and other drug issues. Individual chapters occasionally sponsor speakers as well.
- **IFC Resolution** – Following the student deaths due to alcohol in 1997-98 the Interfraternity Council passed a resolution signed by 31 fraternity presidents pledging to “recommit ourselves to the education of our brothers and new members to the dangers of alcohol abuse... .”
- **ABC Conference** – Greek Life staff and eight Greek students attended the 1998 ABC Conference. Virginia Tech had the largest delegation of all universities at the conference.

*Wellness-Oriented Residence Hall*

- **The W.E.L.L.** – The Wellness Environment for Living and Learning provides a substance-free, wellness-oriented residential option for students. Last year it won national recognition as a model for supporting student learning.

*Alcohol-Free Student Activities*

- **Existing Alcohol-Free Activities** - Virginia Tech has an extensive and varied student activities program, with approximately 25,000 alcohol-free activities annually, including student programs, meetings, intramural games, religious activities, and programs in residence halls and on the campus grounds. Virginia Tech students have established 540 student organizations representing every imaginable interest area. The major programming organizations (the Virginia Tech Union and the Black Student Alliance) produced 264 programs serving approximately 69,000 attendees— all without alcohol.
- **Funding for Student Activities** – The university allocated \$770,000 last year for student organizations and their programs, demonstrating a major commitment to alcohol-free activities for students.

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## JUDICIAL POLICY AND SANCTIONS

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The possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages is permitted on campus only for those 21 years of age and older and then only in the privacy of residence hall student rooms or at specific functions for which the serving of alcohol has been approved. Violators of this policy are subject to arrest by the Virginia Tech Police and/or referral to the Student Judicial System, with the following sanctions:

Offense	Minor Violation	Major Violation
First	Probation and Educational Experience	Deferred Suspension and Education Experience
Second	Deferred Suspension and Educational Experience	Suspension and Medical Clearance for Readmission
Third	Suspension	Dismissal

### *Definitions*

**Minor Violation:** prohibited possession, consumption, or distribution of beverage alcohol that does not endanger the health, safety, or welfare of oneself or others.

**Major Violation:** prohibited possession, consumption, or distribution of beverage alcohol that endangers the health, safety, or welfare of oneself or others.

**Probation:** a stern warning to the student that his or her status with the university is altered such that further violations of any university policy will result in him or her being considered for suspension from the university.

**Deferred Suspension:** strongest warning possible, for a specific time period. A finding of guilt of violating any university policy during this time will result in suspension from the university.

**Suspension:** separation from the university for one or more semesters.

**Dismissal:** permanent removal/expulsion from the university.

A sanction of deferred suspension or higher also results in ineligibility for on-campus housing for the next year.

*Interventions available as a result of judicial sanction or nonjudicial referral:*

**Level 1 – Educational contact as a part of judicial process**

Check list assessment is completed. Student is given literature and signed up for appropriate further intervention.

**Level 2 – Completion of an educational project, plus a reflection paper**

Educational project options:

- A research paper on some aspect of alcohol abuse
- The *Alcohol 101* CD-ROM program
- Interview an appropriate faculty or staff member

**Level 3 – Referral for group intervention, plus a reflection paper**

Group intervention options:

- “Choices and Consequences.” This is a self assessment group that focuses on helping students define their relationship with alcohol, understanding the effects of binge drinking, and thinking through choices to be made regarding the use of alcohol.
- “Controlled Drinking” Group. This is an ongoing group, open for joining at any time, that focuses on the development of personal responsibility and preventing addiction.

**Level 4 – Referral for individual intervention, plus a reflection paper**

Individual appointment with the Director of Health and Counseling Centers for evaluation and referral to other campus or community resources. This may lead to psychiatric evaluation, referral to group interventions, continued individual counseling, or referral to community services. This is particularly used for students who have been transported to the hospital for alcohol overdose.