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DEPAUW STUDENT GOVERNMENT

WHITE PAPER NO. 3

A White Paper Concerning Overconsumption of Alcohol on Campus

Overconsumption of alcoholic beverages is a major concern on DePauw’s campus. Recently, DePauw has received some media attention for the same reason (being featured in Princeton Review’s list of top 10 party schools in the nation). As such, it is important that we look at our current policies and attempt to reevaluate the effectiveness of certain policies. The particular policy that we would like to discuss is the current ban on kegs.

The general rationale behind changing the current policy on kegs is that the ability to have kegs on campus will ultimately reduce the total consumption of alcohol while promoting a safer environment at social gatherings. Currently, fraternity houses invest considerable amounts of money in purchasing single serving beer cans that are placed in large coolers that are readily and easily available. We believe that kegs, being a single container, will result in the formation of regular queues at parties, thereby promoting a waiting period between the consumption of consequent drinks.

Since the keg will have to be placed in a central strategic location, they will also be easier to monitor and control, and party organizers will be able to use proper judgment while serving alcohol to individuals (thereby reducing the likelihood of an intoxicated individual receiving even more alcohol).

Another huge impact of prohibiting kegs is the environmental impact that all the aluminum beer cans have on the campus’ sustainability initiatives currently. A large fraternity may consume anywhere from 12,000 to 18,000 beer cans a semester, most of which are trashed, not recycled. That raises a huge question about the sustainability initiatives that the university is promoting. Not only will kegs help eliminate this waste; they will also help in decreasing this massive consumption in the first place.

In order to substantiate the claim let us look to research. Kilmer and colleagues (1999) evaluated the effects of banning kegs in all fraternity/sorority houses at one university. One year after the ban, average drinks per occasion and average drinks per party actually increased among fraternity/sorority members. Anecdotal reports from fraternity/sorority indicated that students started drinking more liquor than beer.

In order to reevaluate our own policies, we must look to other leading institutions across the nation and see what effective policies they are able to implement. For example Princeton's neighbor to the north, Cook College of Rutgers University, has tapped into a different idea:

