

Asking Around

Rather than the school year trying to force our opinion on you, we have created a forum to hear from you, the college community. Each issue we will explore a different topic by random selection and short editorials, by both the staff and you, the readers.

The next Capital Times will deal with excellence in teaching: what makes a good instructor? Anyone

with an interest in this is asked to submit his feelings in typewritten format to the Capital Times, Room 212. To be considered for publishing, the editorial must be signed, and submitted by October 1.

We will also be accepting topic ideas for future Asking Around features. Any ideas selected will be credited to you in the paper.

The focus of this feature is the new alcohol policy which went into effect at the start of the semester.

Bryce Jordan
University President

Task Force Identified Alcohol Abuse Problem Areas

Early in the Spring Semester 1985, I appointed a Task Force to study alcohol use and abuse at University Park and in the local community, and to make appropriate recommendations.

In November, 1985, the Task Force presented its final report to me. I subsequently met with key student leaders and appropriate administrative staff.

On May 1, 1986, I released a policy document which clarifies existing University policies that govern the conduct of students and student organizations with respect to the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages. In reviewing the policy document, I noted that the University disciplinary system and the Student Code of Conduct apply principally to on-campus students and student organizations. Neither the disciplinary system nor the code of conduct

applies to off-campus student activity, except where such conduct is determined to have a substantial adverse effect on the University or upon individual members of the University community.

The Alcohol Task Force identified two key underlying assumptions in the preparation of its report.

First and foremost, the University has an obligation, as an educational institution, to educate students, employees and the community regarding alcohol. The University, through its various services, will assist students in obtaining appropriate treatment when conditions of alcohol abuse exist. The entire Division of Student Services will continue its efforts in sponsoring nonalcoholic social events and activities on campus, as well as other program related

efforts recommended by the Alcohol Task Force. The University should and will use its resources, including its curriculum, to help persons make responsible decisions about alcohol, and to prevent alcohol abuse.

Second, the University has an obligation, as a state related institution, to base its policies on alcohol on the laws of the Commonwealth.

We need to work together to make the learning environment free of behavior which undermines the value of the education students receive. We can all help in this effort by continuing our commitment to maintain an educational environment that promotes values, attitudes and behavior which permits each student to develop to his or her full potential.

Jan Travers
Capital Times Editor

New Policy Only Protects University

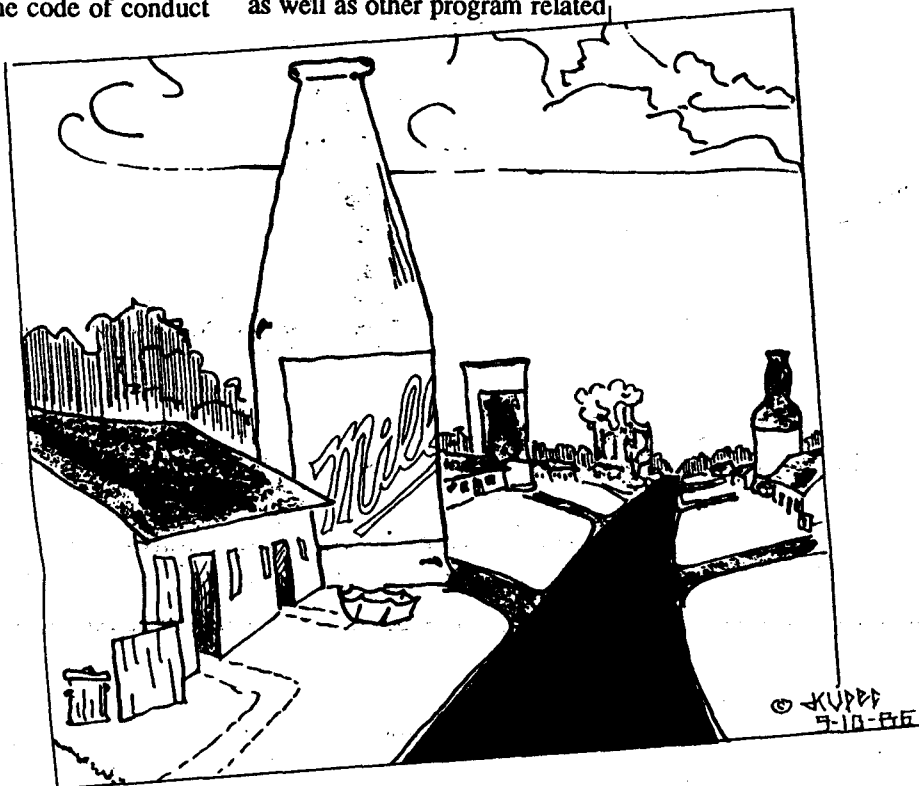
"When drinking interferes with a student's performance in the classroom, it's time to make changes," a campus administrator said to me recently. This seems to be the justification behind the new alcohol policy of refusing to allow alcohol to be served at any undergraduate function on university property. The administration sees a problem with alcohol and they are taking steps to remedy it, all for the good of the students, right?

Not exactly. It's true there is a new policy, and it's true it is intended to cut down on underage drinking, but I feel the real intent behind it is not concerned with curbing alcohol abuse, but legally covering the university in the event of any problems. President Bryce Jordan said as much when the board of trustees adopted the policy in May. He was quoted as saying the legislation was "intended to

distance the university in terms of legal liability."

Studies at this campus have indicated that alcohol is the most abused substance used. But one can't assume this means only undergraduate students are responsible. If the university was really concerned with high alcohol consumption on its campuses, they would have implemented, side by side with the regulation, a total public relations effort educating all areas of the college community about the dangers of alcohol abuse.

I applaud Penn State for its nonsense approach to the enforcement of the policy, insisting all violators will be disciplined, but I also think it is short-sighted of the powers to try to solve a problem without dealing with the cause. The only good to come out of the regulation falls to the university, in relieving it of its responsibility.



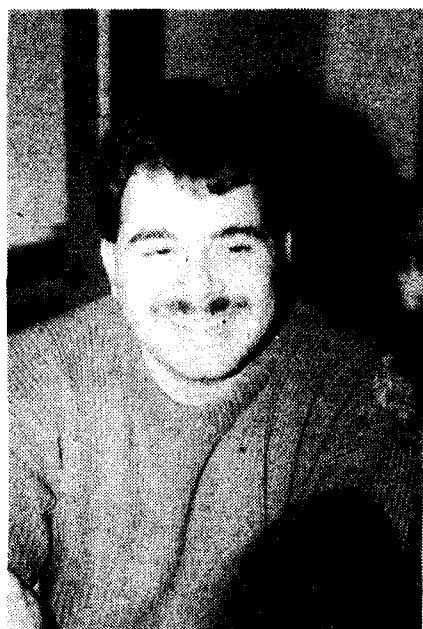
What do you think of the new alcohol policy?

Photo by Sylvia Johnson



Charles Dishong
Marketing

I'm against it. This is another manifestation of the litigation crisis in America. Though I understand the administration's concern about liability issues, limiting a party to 35 to 50 people does not necessarily reduce the potential risk for an accident.



Brian Coons
Accounting

I'm undecided. No matter what the school does they won't be able to stop people from drinking. However, I agree they have a right to try to stop potential accidents and injuries on campus because of liability to the university.



Crystal Drumheller
Accounting

I'm against it. It should be up to the students to do what they want as long as they are of legal age. If dances are prohibited from even allowing people to bring their own liquor, no one will come.



Lisa Tamaro
Marketing

I'm against it. We're supposed to be adults. Those of us over 21 are not going to take advantage of a less strict alcohol policy. It will make us go to bars instead of staying home and we'll end up having to drive farther creating a greater risk.