

August 2013

# HELPING YOUR STUDENT STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY



**UMBC**  
AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

The Division of  
**STUDENT AFFAIRS**

*Photo by Chris Harlove for UMBC*

# A Statement of Campus Standards

Dr. Nancy Young, Ph.D.  
*Vice President, Student Affairs*



Each year a new group of students joins us at UMBC and each year staff, faculty, and returning student leaders endeavor to help students navigate the difficult choices they may encounter in their new environment related to alcohol and other drugs. **The health, safety, and well-being of your student is a priority for all of us at UMBC.** There are few student-related behaviors that impact the safety and well-being of our community more than the use of alcohol and other drugs. Alcohol use and abuse has been correlated with everything from academic difficulty to assaults, relationship violence, hospitalizations, and death from over consumption. As you'll read in this newsletter, **UMBC is proud of the comparatively low alcohol use rates** reported in our campus assessments. Yet, even with low rates of consumption, we know that some of our students will make choices that place their safety at risk.

Because even one student hospitalized for alcohol overdose is one too many, **we are hoping that you'll partner with us by having a conversation about alcohol with your student** prior to their arrival in the August. Talk to them about the serious academic culture at UMBC. Ask them how they plan to handle the influence of alcohol and other drugs when they encounter it. Make sure they recognize the signs of alcohol overdose and abuse. Even as they seek independence, many students will still listen to your opinions and advice (even when they act like they aren't listening.) We are proud of the intellectual culture and positive climate for engaging student life that we've cultivated at UMBC. With your help, we can maintain it, build on our strengths and help your student to be both successful and safe.



## *Campus Safety Message*

While UMBC is generally a safe campus, we are not a sanctuary from crime or accidents particularly those involving alcohol use. UMBC Police and other campus offices work together to reduce risks to personal safety and security to our community members. Like anywhere else in the world, personal safety is largely dependent on individual preventive and precautionary efforts. For more information regarding campus safety please visit <http://www.umbc.edu/police/>.

# Our Campus Culture Defined



*UMBC's high-risk drinking rate for 1st year students is 11%, half of the national average of 22%.*

## UMBC Ranks Below National Averages for Alcohol and other Drug Uses

UMBC is not immune from the problems associated with alcohol and drug use, however, lower than typical alcohol and drug use is an important part of our institutional culture. Both national assessments and online intervention results continuously rank UMBC below the national averages for alcohol and other drug use. If your child is an abstainer, then our evidence suggests that they will likely be in good company.

- Nearly 8 out of 10 of our first-year students consider themselves to be “non drinkers” (*AlcoholEdu, first year student alcohol survey, 2012*)
- UMBC's high-risk drinking rate for first year students is 11%, half of the national average of 22%. High-risk drinking, commonly referred to as “binge drinking,” is defined as 5 or more drinks per person in one sitting (*AlcoholEdu, first year student alcohol survey, 2012*).
- 55% of first-year students entering UMBC in the Fall of 2012 reported not consuming alcohol in the past 12 Months (*AlcoholEdu, first year student alcohol survey, 2012*).



*Photos by Bruce Well for UMBC*

Formed in 2011, the Learning Collaborative on High-Risk Drinking is the inaugural initiative of the National College Health Improvement Program (NCHIP).

## UMBC Joins 31 Colleges and Universities in a Learning Collaborative on High Risk Drinking

**A new way of looking at an old problem:** Colleges and universities from around the country are joining forces to address the problem of high-risk drinking on college campuses. This unprecedented initiative uses comprehensive evaluation and measurement techniques to identify and implement the most effective ways to tackle a problem that has persisted for more than four decades, and to help lessen the harms it causes.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY



*Check Out the UMBC Promotional Video*



# An In-Depth Look at a Successful Alcohol Prevention Program

By Alison Rohrbach, Assistant Director and Mickey Arora, Health Educator, University Health Services

You may have heard the term *AlcoholEdu* used frequently during the Freshmen and Family Orientation Programs this summer here at UMBC. By now, your student should have received a letter reminding them of the importance of taking this course. So, what is *AlcoholEdu* all about, and how does it affect what you do as parents?

*AlcoholEdu for College* is a Population-Level Prevention® program that is designed to be given to an entire population of students, such as an entering first-year class. This method creates a learning experience that:

- Motivates behavior change
- Resets unrealistic expectations about the effects of alcohol
- Links choices about drinking to academic and personal success
- Helps students practice safer decision-making
- Engages students to create a healthier campus community

Since Fall 2007, all incoming freshmen at UMBC have been required to participate in the *AlcoholEdu for College* program. Students are sent emails over the summer explaining how to access the course and given instructions for each part. Students take the first part of the course over the summer, which captures data on their drinking behaviors, attitudes and risk factors before they come to UMBC. Students also participate in a 2 hour educational piece of the program, which offers prevention strategies, tips for healthy decision making, and much more. About 45 days after students complete Part 1 of the course, they are then emailed Part 2. This part of the course is intentionally given to students after they have entered UMBC and been on campus for a short while. The questions in Part 2 are very similar to those in Part 1 so that changes in behaviors, attitudes and risk factors can be seen.

Overall, *AlcoholEdu* has proven to be an effective educational tool and prevention strategy at UMBC. The data collected over the last few years has allowed UMBC to develop policy changes, implement educational outreach and tailor programming efforts. UMBC faculty and staff are grateful for your support as parents to encourage your students to complete this course and contribute to the essential data.

**For questions regarding *AlcoholEdu* or the data obtained, please contact Alison Rohrbach in University Health Services at [arohrbach@umbc.edu](mailto:arohrbach@umbc.edu).**



## Misconduct Involving Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Problems associated with alcohol and drug use (noise, vandalism, assaults, injuries) impact all students. In order to promote the safety and well-being of our entire student population, the Office of Student Judicial Programs is designed to protect your student and others by holding them accountable to our campus Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.umbc.edu/sjp/articles/code.html> ). Our first objective is to assess and educate a student who chooses to drink or use drugs so they can make healthy and safe decisions. Common sanctions for misconduct involving alcohol (see rule 3 in the Code of Student Conduct) for a first-time violation include:

- A **period of disciplinary probation** and, if living on-campus, a period of **Residential Life probation**,
- A required **online alcohol education module**,

More severe sanctions for multiple offenses could include, but are not limited to, loss of housing, restricted access to all residential areas including the dining hall, and suspension from the university, depending on the severity of the case.

Common sanctions for misconduct involving drugs (see rule 4 in the Code of Student Conduct) for a first-time violation include:

- **Loss of on campus housing and restricted access to all residential areas** including the dining hall.
- A **period of disciplinary probation**

More severe sanctions could include, but are not limited to suspension from the university.



Photo by Howard Korn for UMBC

## The “College Effect”

By Joel DeWyer, Associate Director, The Commons

According to *Outside the Classroom, Inc.*, the organization responsible for creating the AlcoholEdu survey that is administered to incoming first-year students across the country, student drinking rates, on a national level, tend to follow a particular pattern. Often referred to as the *college effect*, generally speaking, a college student’s rate of drinking tends to increase during the summer months prior to the start of the fall semester and, in some cases, substantially increasing over the course of the first six weeks after moving to campus.

The first six weeks of the fall semester are a critical time for your student socially, as well as academically, which is why we hope you will partner with us in engaging your student now, so that we can set them up for a successful academic and social life from day one. On the following page please find some helpful actions we hope you will take before move-in day at the end of August (Continued on page 6).

# The “College Effect”

(Continued from pg. 4)

**Ask them if they plan on attending *Involvement Fest!*** Held on The Commons quad on **Wednesday, September 4, 2013**, this is a fantastic opportunity for seeing what student organizations are out there that meet the needs and interests of your retriever.

**Encourage them to explore the recreational opportunities within *The Commons*.** **The Gameroom**, located on the 2nd floor of The Commons, has billiards, table-tennis, and video-gaming available to all students. Additionally, this is a fantastic and low-key way for students to meet new friends as well as a healthy way to relax and unwind during or after a stressful day.

**Ask hard questions about alcohol use and abuse.** “What will you do if you find a student passed out in your residence hall?” “How will you decide whether or not to drink while you’re at school?” “What will you do if your driver chose to drink?” These may seem like difficult questions to ask, but evidence has shown that engaged parents can have a positive influence on the choices their students make around alcohol and drug use.



Photo by Howard Korn for UMBC

**Talk with them about the dangers of alcohol overdose or poisoning and encourage them to intervene when others are in trouble with alcohol.** Make sure they know what to do if they see someone passed out or unconscious. They can get help by calling 410-455-5555 or 911. Choosing to let a roommate or friend “sleep it off” can turn out to be a **dangerous decision**. If they have concerns with problem drinking patterns, their Resident Assistant (RA) or Commuter Assistant (CA) is a good source of peer help. For additional suggestions, please visit: [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)



Photo by Bruce Well for UMBC



Photo by Marlayna Demond for UMBC

## Keeping Students Healthy and Well

By Jennifer Treger, Community Health and Safety Specialist & Mickey Arora, Health Education Coordinator

College is a time of transition. Students often arrive at college for the first time without having thought about their health or wellness. According to the National Wellness Institute, wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence. In addition, wellness is multi-dimensional and holistic, encompassing life-style, mental and spiritual well-being, and the environment. In order to achieve one's highest potential, all aspects of wellness need to be addressed. Choosing healthy foods, making time for exercise, getting enough sleep, creating time for social interaction, getting involved in community and having alone time for quiet are examples of health behaviors that can help students stay healthy.

Parents can play an important role in encouraging healthy habits for their college students. Data shows that stress is a major factor negatively affecting students during college. Finding healthy ways to cope with stress are important life skills that students will continue to develop during college. Parents can be tuned in to their college student and look for any warning signs that may be a sign that their student's health is in jeopardy.

According to the American Psychological Association, the following experiences, thoughts, and feelings signal the presence of a variety of mental health problems or the need for help:

- finding little or no pleasure in life
- feeling worthless or extremely guilty
- crying a lot for no particular reason
- withdrawing from other people
- experiencing severe anxiety, panic, or fear
- having big mood swings
- experiencing a change in eating or sleeping patterns
- having very low energy
- losing interest in hobbies and pleasurable activities
- having too much energy, having trouble concentrating or following through on plans
- feeling easily irritated or angry

- experiencing racing thoughts or agitation
- hearing voices or seeing images that other people do not experience
- believing that others are plotting against you
- wanting to harm yourself or someone else.

It's not necessarily easy to spot these signs, or to figure out what they mean. Qualified mental health professionals are skilled in making an accurate diagnosis. As a general rule: the longer the signs last, the more serious they are; and the more they interfere with daily life, the greater the chance that professional treatment is needed.

There is a lot your student can do to both stay well and cope with stress in healthy ways during college. University Health Services has resources available to learn more about personal health and well-being. If a problem does arise, being aware and knowing the warning signs will help you recognize if your student is experiencing a difficult time and allow you to support them. Remember to take advantage of campus resources such as The Counseling Center and the Behavioral Risk Assessment and Consultation Team (BRACKT) if you have concerns. We know when a student is healthy; they are more likely to perform better in school. UMBC is committed to supporting your students in all aspects of their collegiate experience.



Photo by Bruce Well for UMBC

Source: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/change.aspx>

# UMBC: A CARING COMMUNITY

It is important that all of our students take care of themselves and also look out for each other as members of a campus community. Here are some on campus resources should your student need assistance.

**Emergencies:** If you know or observe that someone is a potential harm to him/herself or someone else please contact University Police at 410-455-5555 (on campus) or 911 (off campus).

**The Counseling Center:** If you know or observe someone to be troubled, confused, very sad, highly anxious, irritable, lacks motivation and/or concentration, demonstrates bizarre behavior, or thinking/talking, writing/e-mailing/texting about suicide please contact UMBC Counseling Services at 410-455-2472.

**Behavioral Concerns:** Some UMBC community members may find themselves confronted with a situation in which they feel uncertain, uncomfortable or disturbed by an individual's behavior, whether in class, in the workplace or at a meeting or event. University Police (410-455-5555) Student Judicial Programs (410-455-2453), Student Affairs Office (410-455-2393) and members of the [Behavioral Risk Assessment and Consultation Team](#) are a resource for you and can help you deal with the situation.



## Retrievers Look Out For Each Other

Last year, UMBC launched a violence prevention program on our campus called the Green Dot Bystander Intervention Program. Violence is an unfortunate reality in our society. It happens in all types of relationships in many different forms from physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological violence. Alcohol use has the potential to increase the likelihood of violence. Because we know that violence is happening, it is important for our students to have the knowledge, awareness and skills to address the issue.



The Green Dot Bystander Intervention program teaches how to be an active bystander and react to a situation that has the potential for violence as well as teaches how to be proactive in creating a culture that does not tolerate violence. The Green Dot Bystander Intervention program is about helping students learn how to keep our campus safer. In addition, it empowers the students who are trained to do the right thing for themselves and their neighbor. Students participate in a 5-hour training that provides them with the knowledge and skills to be an active bystander as well as giving them choices of how to respond in a way that is comfortable for them. To date, we have trained over 300 members of our campus community and hope to train as many students as we can to strengthen the value of a community of caring. The Green Dot slogan is “No one has to do everything, everyone has to do something”. We can

work together to create a culture on our campus where we do not accept violence and we look out for our each other. For more information or if your student is interested in participating in a Green Dot training, please contact Jennifer Treger at [jtreger@umbc.edu](mailto:jtreger@umbc.edu) or 410-455-3797.



## *Connecting parents and families to the UMBC*

This special edition of the Parent's Connection Newsletter is provided for families of new UMBC students. Parents and family members are strongly encouraged to subscribe to the electronic parent newsletter, which is emailed to parents through out the academic year. This edition contains information we hope will prove helpful as you prepare to send your son or daughter to UMBC in the Fall.

**To register for the Parents' Connection Newsletter send an email to [parents@umbc.edu](mailto:parents@umbc.edu).**

Additionally, do you have a question, comment or suggestion? You can also e-mail us at [parents@umbc.edu](mailto:parents@umbc.edu) for assistance. Your question or concern will be addressed within two business days, if not sooner!

Additionally, questions can always be addressed to the Vice President for Student Affairs Office at 410-455-2393.



*Photo by Jim Lord for UMBC*

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