

C: Prevention of Alcohol Abuse and Illicit Drug Use

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to a campus-wide plan to educate students and employees about alcohol and drug issues, discourage the irresponsible use of alcoholic beverages, and prohibit the unlawful use, possession or distribution of controlled substances. The University will act to ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal laws, System policies and University rules and procedures dealing with controlled substances, illicit drugs, and the use of alcohol. The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct provides information on alcohol and drug rules and university sanctions. To review the Student Code of Conduct online, go to <http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu>.

Alcohol and Drug Rules

The University prohibits the use or possession of alcoholic beverages on campus by any individual under the age of 21. Failure to comply with this rule violates state law and the rules governing student conduct and will subject the individual to disciplinary action.

Students of lawful age under Texas Statutes may possess and/or consume alcoholic beverages in the privacy of their rooms or apartments in campus residence facilities. However, residence hall occupants and their guests must comply with state and local statutes concerning possession, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Any use of alcoholic beverages should be in moderation. Therefore, bulk quantities of alcohol (kegs, cases, party balls, etc.) are not allowed on campus or in residence facilities. Loud or disruptive behavior, interference with the cleanliness of residence facilities, or drinking habits that are harmful to the health or education of an individual or those around him/her are reasons for appropriate disciplinary action by the University.

With limited exceptions, the possession of open containers and the consumption of beer, wine, and/or distilled spirits is prohibited in all public areas of the campus. For the purposes of this rule, residence hall balconies and patios are considered public areas. Although students of lawful age may possess and consume alcoholic beverages in the privacy of their rooms or apartments, all alcoholic beverages transported through public areas on the University grounds and in residence facilities must be unopened and concealed.

All members of the University community are expected to abide by state and federal laws pertaining to controlled substances and illicit drugs. Standards of conduct strictly prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of controlled substances, illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia on University property, at University-sponsored activities, and/or while on active duty. Individuals may use prescription medications that are medically necessary and prescribed by a licensed physician.

While the University has limited jurisdiction when alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are consumed off-campus, members of the University community are encouraged to consider these regulations as a guideline for responsible and lawful behavior. Any recognized student organization that plans to include alcohol at an official function off-campus must obtain permission from Student Activities under the University risk management guidelines. Failure to comply with this requirement will be reason for appropriate disciplinary action by the University.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Plan

To implement an effective drug and alcohol abuse prevention plan, the University will use both formal and informal channels of communication to: 1) disseminate information describing patterns of addiction and the physical, mental, and emotional consequences that result from the abuse of alcohol and controlled/illegal substances, 2) distribute information that describes and encourages the use of counseling and treatment modalities available to both students and employees in the local and regional area, and 3) make available to the campus population referrals to local treatment centers and counseling programs. These referrals will be made within a supportive, confidential, and non-punitive environment under the auspices of the University Health Center, Counseling Center, and/or Human Resources.

University Sanctions

Students suspected or found in violation of University drug or alcohol rules and regulations will be notified in writing to appear for a hearing with a judicial affairs officer. Procedures for hearings are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

A student found responsible for violating the rules and regulations will be subject to sanctions commensurate with the offenses and any aggravating and mitigating circumstances. Disciplinary actions in cases involving alcohol and drug-related violations result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University and referral for prosecution. Any disciplinary action imposed by the University may precede and be in addition to any penalty imposed by an off-campus authority. Students will be advised of available alcohol and drug counseling at the University Counseling Center and/or referred to a community organization. The University Counseling Center and the University Health Center can provide assistance and referral to appropriate community agencies.

Advisors and faculty members have the responsibility to supervise student activities on all trips. Faculty members should inform students that actions violating state laws, local regulations, and University rules regarding alcohol and drugs will not be permitted on any University trip. Students who violate these guidelines regarding alcohol and drug use on field trips will be subject to disciplinary action.

Health Risks

Alcohol abuse can cause many health-related problems. Approximately 150,000 deaths annually are directly related to alcohol abuse and/or alcoholism. Alcohol abuse can lead to alcoholism, premature death through overdose, and complications involving the brain, heart, liver, and many other body organs. Alcohol abuse is a prime contributor to suicide, homicide, motor vehicle deaths, and other accidental causes of death. Alcohol abuse also causes liver disease, gastritis, and anemia.

Alcohol abuse interferes with psychological functions, causes interpersonal difficulties, and is involved in many cases of child abuse. Alcohol abuse also disrupts occupational effectiveness and causes legal and financial problems. Alcohol used in any amount by a pregnant woman can cause birth defects.

The abuse of illicit drugs can result in a wide range of health problems. In general, illicit drug use can result in drug addiction, death by overdose, death from withdrawal, seizures, heart problems, infections (i.e., HIV/AIDS, hepatitis), liver disease, and chronic brain dysfunctions. Other problems associated with illicit drug use include psychological dysfunctions such as memory loss, thought disorders (i.e., hallucinations, paranoia, psychosis), and psychological dependency. Additional effects include occupational, social, and family problems as well as a reduction in motivation. Drug use by a pregnant woman may cause addiction or health complications in her unborn child.

Campus Resources

A&M-Corpus Christi offers a variety of programs to promote healthy lifestyles and substance-free alternatives. Students can become involved with the planning of drug and alcohol education programs by contacting the Division of Student Affairs at 361-825-2612.

University Counseling Center - The University Counseling Center offers students individual counseling, educational programming and support groups focused on alcohol and other drug use, abuse and addiction. An Alcohol Education Program for Minors is also available for minors cited/charged with alcohol-related offenses (MIP, DUI, and Public Intoxication). For more information, call 361-825-2703 or visit the web site at <http://counseling.tamucc.edu>.

University Health Center - The University Health Center can provide information about the health risks of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as general medical care for students. For more information, call 361-825-2601.