

PRESS RELEASE

DATE: Nov. 7, 2007
FROM: Faculty Senate Office, University of Massachusetts Amherst
SUBJECT: Success of alcohol awareness program to headline Nov. 15 meeting
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SENATE TO HEAR ALCOHOL ABUSE PROGRAM RESULTS *New program has produced substantive change*

The success of a recent intervention program for high-risk drinkers among UMass students will be presented to the Faculty Senate at its Nov. 15 meeting. The talk, entitled "Success and Sustainability: BASICS at UMass Amherst," will be given by Sally Linowski, associate director of University Health Services.

Developed at the University of Washington, Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students, offers students a nonconfrontational "drinker's check-up," followed by a second appointment in which they are given a personalized profile of their drinking habits that compares them with other students at UMass. Linowski said that all first-time offenders of the University's drinking policy are sent to BASICS, which has been running at UMass for about two and a half years.

"Most of our referrals are alcohol policy violators who are mandated to the program," she said. "But any student can come to the program.

"As far as we know, we are the largest campus using this program with all first and second offenders, so we have the largest number of students who have gone through in one year. It's enough that we can have a really robust evaluation. A lot of campuses are looking at us."

Linowski said she will be offering the senate comparisons of recent drinking rates on campus with data from 1997, as well as comparisons with 2005, when the program was implemented.

"We have some really wonderful new numbers in terms of our campus drinking rates," she said.

Senate leaders also have scheduled a talk by State Rep. Benjamin Swan (D-Springfield). Swan said he plans to talk about legislative issues pertinent to the University and state higher education in general but that his appearance will depend on the House of Representatives being out of formal session on the 15th.

In other business, the senate will consider the annual reports of the Graduate Council, the Research Library Council and the University Writing Committee.

The meeting will take place at 3:30 p.m. in Herter Hall, Room 227.