

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
STUDENT AFFAIRS AND UNIVERSITY LIFE COUNCIL
concerning
**A HEALTH REQUIREMENT FOR
ALCOHOL EDUCATION**

Presented at the
652nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
April 13, 2006

Council Membership

Roland Chilton, Chair
John Cunningham
Michael Gargano
Agustin Lao-Montes
Ernest May
W. Brian O'Connor
Pavel Payano
Kathleen Rubin
Uri Strauss

**Special Report from the Student Affairs and University Life Council
Recommending Faculty Senate Endorsement of a
Health Requirement for Alcohol Education**

When asked to review and endorse the use of an online short course providing alcohol education for incoming students, most members of the Student Affairs and University Life Council were impressed with the goals and the promise of the plan. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs wants to use MyStudentBodyAlcohol.com as a mandatory health requirement for incoming first-year and transfer students beginning at New Student Orientation this summer. His plan is to have all new undergraduate students complete the 75-minute course online by October 15, 2006. Students who fail to comply with this requirement would have a health education hold placed on their account until the requirement is satisfied.

As part of the comprehensive approach to reach subpopulations of students regarded as high-risk for problem drinking behaviors, Student Affairs sees the online short course as an opportunity to increase student knowledge about alcohol and help students assess their alcohol-related risks in hopes that they will then make informed and responsible decisions. For students who drink lightly or not at all, the course affirms their health choices and provides helpful information for dealing with intoxicated individuals, recognizing alcohol overdose, and helping a problem drinker. The Vice Chancellor believes that by instituting MyStudentBodyAlcohol.com as a health requirement for all new students, we can guarantee that all new members of our campus community receive critical alcohol information, personalized feedback, and emergency contact and referral information in a cost-effective manner.

We think the Vice Chancellor's confidence in the program is justified because randomized, controlled clinical trials were used to evaluate it. In the studies, students who completed "MyStudentBody-Alcohol" reported significant decreases in their alcohol use. Overall, the number of binge drinking episodes, typical drinking frequencies, and the quantity of alcohol consumed on special occasions all decreased over the study period. On-campus evaluations provide additional support for the effectiveness of the program. All Resident Assistants, sorority and fraternity members, and first-year student athletes completed the course by the end of February 2006, and their satisfaction with MSB was high.

The Student Affairs and University Life Council recommends that the Faculty Senate endorse this effort to allow UMass-Amherst students to obtain personalized alcohol information in a confidential way. MSB-Alcohol attempts to respond to students' differences and appears to give each user a unique interactive experience. Technical requirements to run the program are minimal, namely a computer with internet access. Faculty Senators and others who are curious about the program can look at the site by logging into MyStudentBody.com. Simply click on "Is this your First Time?", enter school code UMASSA, and view the site using the "free-roam" option. Dr. Sally Linowski can answer any questions you have about the program. You can contact her at sallyl@uhs.umass.edu.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate endorse the administration's plan to require
32-06 incoming first-year students to complete the 75-minute online course called
MyStudentBody Alcohol.com, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 06-031A.