

Who Got That Loud?

By Theresa "Raey" Walker

Oct. 27, 2012, was the last drug violation reported on campus out of the 34 violations total this year. FSU is looking to decrease that number in the coming year, but it is going to take more than wishing and hoping. It is going to take action from campus police, students, student leaders, faculty and staff alike.

The truth is if you ask anyone on any given college or university campus across America "is there drug use amongst your peers" you will get a resounding "YES"! Drug use in college for many has been a no brainer; you are expected to at least experiment with marijuana or LSD and maybe even try something harder like cocaine. FSU is no exception; we have drug use like any other school.

FSU has the lowest number of violations within the UNC system and should be proud of that. However, this year, there has been an increase to 34 violations from 19 last year.

The reason for this explains Robert Hassell, FSU's chief of campus police, is because since he has taken over as chief in January of this year, he has revamped the police staff and how they interact with students.

"Because I now require my officers to ride police bikes, get out of their cars, speak with the students, and become more involved with campus life, they are finding violations that they would not have come across if they were just sitting in their squad cars driving around," says Chief Hassell. "You might even see me at a few events, just to interact with students, to get to know them," he adds.

To look at it from another perspective: the 34 violations for example may have always been 34 violations but in previous years they went undetected because the foot patrol and involvement was not as prominent.

FSU is considered one of the safest schools in the UNC system, with other

schools having drug violations like Appalachian State University having the highest number of reported drug arrests on a UNC-system campus, with 450, since 2007, out of 16 schools. To be fair, FSU is a smaller school than ASU (population wise) but the percentage of violations is still lower than ASU.

"Officers don't go looking for drug violations, but because they are more involved they stumble upon information, discover violations, and students, faculty, and staff, are more willing to answer questions, or provide leads." Answers Chief Hassell, when asked how officers are finding these violations.

"I want students to know they can go to the police if they need help and not see them as a threat," states Chief Hassell.

There is no formal operation going on within the police department to "crack down" on drug use, no undercover detectives posing as your new roommate, the DEA is not sitting in unmarked vans in front of your dorm, waiting for a code word to kick down your door, individuals are not even being profiled. What is happening as a result of conscience improvements within the police department are officers working with students, faculty, and staff, to educate the students, and spread awareness on the campus to prevent incidents. Students who find themselves with a citation to appear before the schools judicial system, risk academic probation, may have scholarship(s) revoked, suspension, or even exploitation, depending on the severity of the violation.

Lifestyle Choice

Violations have been found in four of the 10 dormitories on campus, while other violators are have been bold enough to smoke marijuana in common areas on campus such as benches and in parking lots.

Romie Parker, a sophomore at FSU says "I often see "dime bags" or marijuana baggies on the ground, in classes, or you can smell it on the students clothing. It's no secret they are doing drugs." FSU, although far from perfect in terms of being drug free, can report that there have been no evidence of hard drug use like cocaine, crack, PCP or LSD. Marijuana is seen to be the drug of

choice, but it does not make its use any safer.

Get Involved

Dr. Haynie, Dr. Hadley, Chief Hassell, and Mr. Robert Botley, Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance, have come together with student leaders to host town hall forums on campus to get feedback

from the students concerning drugs, safety, and other pressing issues, and to clearly spell out the consequences if you choose to violate any rules or laws.

"We want to make sure that we protect our name. When people hear the name FSU they don't think of drugs, they think of all the positive things and what a great institution this is. We need to make sure we don't tarnish our reputation in any way." Chief Hassell proudly states. "The safety of the students comes first, but we have to work together to ensure that," he adds.

If you take pride in FSU and yourself then show it! FSU challenges you to stay drug free, stay in the books, and stay involved. If you have any ideas or suggestions the Chancellors, and Police Chief encourage you to attend meetings and share ideas that can help keep FSU safe and decrease our violation numbers in the coming year so that FSU can remain one of the safest campuses within the UNC system and across the nation.

To read this story in it's entirety, check out fsuvoice.com