

Campus police stress importance of awareness of amnesty policy

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An N.C. law that went into effect earlier this year provides persons under the age of 21 with amnesty in regards to lawful action in cases of overdose.

Senate Bill 20, now a N.C. state law, states persons acting in good faith toward the well-being of another will be granted amnesty in certain situations. The law also states you must remain with the person in need of medical attention in order to gain this immunity.

"This law is designed to protect students from alcohol poisoning or drug overdoses," **Eric Boyce, chief of police**, said. "The bill states that if you call for a person that has consumed too much alcohol or may need medical attention for drug- or alcohol-related reasons, then you can't get in trouble for calling."

For occurrences involving alcohol, the bill states the law only applies if three requirements are met from the person calling the authorities: The person calling must be acting in good faith and upon a reasonable belief the authorities were the first people called; next, the person calling must use his or her own name when contacting the authorities. Failure to use or give your name may result in lawful action. Finally, the person calling must remain with the individual until help arrives. The negligence of any of these requirements may result in law-

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Chief of
campus police

ful action.

Boyce said it should be noted this law only applies if the two people stay together, and separation of the two people involved may result in a void of the law.

"The law specifically says that if you call and you are found in possession of something illegal or you are violating a law, then you have amnesty, because you stayed with that person," Boyce said.

Senate Bill 20 defines drug-related overdoses as acute conditions, such as

mania, hysteria, extreme physical illness or death. During a drug-related overdose, limited immunity applies. A person acting out of amnesty cannot be charged for a misdemeanor, felony or with possession of less than one gram of cocaine or heroin. It also states the person who overdosed is protected by the previously-listed immunities as well.

Boyce said many students know of this policy, and awareness should encourage them to tell others about it as well.

"I don't think this is hidden or under the radar at all. There should be raised awareness of this issue to let student knows that this amnesty policy is out there. The safety of the students is our no. 1 priority, so as long as you are taking measures to get aid for a student, then you are doing the right thing," Boyce said.

John Browning, a junior accounting student, said he knows a lot of people would rather stay with the person overdosing than report it and get in trouble.

"I think this is a really good amnesty policy. It really helps when you can get everyone involved. It's all a lot better that way. When you don't have the fear of getting in trouble, you can talk to you resident assistant, and people are more likely to get help. Some people just don't know about it, though," Browning said.

Browning said he lives off campus, but hasn't heard about this policy from any of his friends who live on campus

or otherwise.

"I assume that everyone in the student body would be for this if they knew about it. I have personally never heard anything about it, but it sounds like a really useful policy," Browning said.

Browning said he fears this might promote underage drinking in the student body.

"The only problem I see with this is that it will encourage drinking and deter actual consequences, but then again, it will be better for student health, because students are going to drink. That's just how it is, so this policy is really better for student health overall," Browning said.

This policy is definitely a step in the right direction, **Molly Harkavy, a senior math student**, said.

"It's about people's safety, ultimately, and I think it's helpful," Harkavy said. "I know in high school, people didn't want to take drunk people to the hospital because they would get in trouble, and there was a lot of alcohol poisoning because of it. I definitely think this is a good policy."

Harkavy said she thinks the school probably hides the policy to discourage underage drinking.

"I definitely think it's probably one of those kind of unknown things around here. I had no idea about it, or even any idea that it was a North Carolina wide policy, and I live here," Harkavy said.

SGA did not hold its weekly meeting last Wednesday, Oct. 16. Check back next week for continued coverage on SGA's agenda.

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