

Locals debate alcohol policies Diversity group to issue report soon

BY LAURA OLENIAC
STAFF WRITER

Locals from all different areas of the Chapel Hill community are engaging in a fight against underage drinking, but there is less consensus on the extent of the problem and the best way to fight its upward trend.

Some Chapel Hill Town Council members have supported a statewide beer keg registration policy that would require merchants to track keg purchases, allowing law enforcement officials to prosecute those who supply alcohol to minors.

"This is a nationwide issue, pervasive through all of the community, not just college towns," said council member Jim Ward, who first requested that keg registration be added to the council's legislative requests in February.

Twenty-three other states and the District of Columbia now have similar registration policies.

But concerned parents such as Dale Pratt-Wilson, who formed the Committee for Alcohol- and Drug-Free Teenagers, say better community interaction might be a more practical solution.

"There's a tremendous amount

of the council and the community can do to address the issue," she said.

Pratt-Wilson's group told the council in December that to curb underage substance abuse, officials might hire additional Alcohol Law Enforcement officers, increase educational programs in schools and establish more substance-abuse treatment facilities in the county.

Area high school officials recently reviewed changes to their substance abuse policy, advocating more preventive measures.

"This is the first time ... where this kind of energy has been put into ... the need to address substance abuse," said Stephanie Willis, health services coordinator for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

She said substance-abuse worries always existed but were revitalized with Pratt-Wilson's committee.

Pratt-Wilson said substance abuse is not just a local problem, but a national epidemic. Bill Patterson of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Chapel Hill said such concerns are not unfounded.

He said that in North Carolina, the total cost resulting from underage drinking is about \$1.3 billion.

A survey conducted last year showed that 52 percent of Chapel Hill high school students consumed alcohol within one month of the survey — 8 percentage points above the national average.

Those results sparked much of the recent controversy, Willis said, though she said the results might be exaggerated because only 134 students were polled. A more comprehensive survey taken from about 3,000 high school students will be released at the end of May, she said.

Willis said she stands behind efforts to fight substance abuse and thinks that it is a problem everywhere, not just in college towns.

But Tony Mills, assistant supervisor at the state ALE office in Raleigh, said it is hard to ignore that there is a larger underage population in a college town. "You see more citations in college-town areas ... because of their populations."

There are two ALE officers responsible for Chapel Hill. Pratt-Wilson's committee will continue its efforts at a meeting later this month.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

BY RACHEL BROCK
STAFF WRITER

The Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity is steps away from determining the state of diversity on campus and submitting a report to Chancellor James Moeser before the semester's end.

The task force met Wednesday to review a preliminary draft of the report that it hopes to have completed and brought before the chancellor by the end of this month.

"I think we've come an enormous way to be this far," law professor Charles Daye said of the task force that met for the first time last fall.

During Wednesday's meeting, the group discussed changes that should be made to the document, which will be compiled by a professional writer and circulated once again for final approval from the committee.

The group viewed a first draft of the report and brainstormed a variety of ideas for the final copy.

Members debated a number of

recommendations to determine how specific each would be.

The process is a long one because they want to be sure that the final report reflects the feelings of the 38-member task force, said Archie Ervin, director of the Office for Minority Affairs.

In December, the task force developed five core values — vision and commitment to diversity, the presence of diversity, educational benefits of diversity, responsible interactions and a supportive climate — to guide them throughout the process.

At the beginning of this semester, a survey sent to students, faculty and staff inquired about their views of diversity on campus. The Office of Institutional Research used a variety of methods such as questionnaires, focus groups and interviews in hopes of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

After subcommittees received the research results in March, the complete task force came together to hear presentations and discuss how they

would condense the findings into a coherent report for Moeser.

Although the task force aims to complete its formal duties when it submits recommendations to the chancellor, officials said the University will continue to examine diversity issues in the future.

"This is not the end of either examination of diversity or the end of research on the state of diversity," said Cookie Newsom, director of diversity education and research for the Office for Minority Affairs.

The University community will need to follow up the task force's work by taking meaningful steps and ensuring that the commitment to diversity is not ignored, members said.

Incentives need to be provided to faculty and staff to promote diversity in the future, Ervin said.

"In a year hence, I would like to see a report card on this."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

2 professors earn national award

BY KATHRYN BALES
STAFF WRITER

University professors are two of 186 recipients of the prestigious John Simon Guggenheim Foundation fellowships for excellence in academics.

Gerald Postema, a Cary C. Boshamer Professor of philosophy, and Donald Raleigh, a Jay Richard Judson Distinguished Professor of history, received the distinction and will receive a portion of the \$7,112,000 available for research.

Judith Wegner, chairwoman of the faculty, said faculty members' success in winning the awards reflects well on the University because the fellowships are not easy to get.

"They are distinguished faculty, and I'm glad they were successful in seeking the awards," she said.

The Guggenheim Foundation provides fellowships for individual professionals in a variety of fields.

Raleigh was recognized for his work in Russian history on a book about Soviet baby boomers. As part

of his work, he is preparing a collection of full-length interviews for collection by Indiana University Press.

Raleigh was unavailable for comment Wednesday.

Postema was honored for his work in law and philosophy on public discipline.

Postema has been a part of the campus community for 25 years, but in the coming year he will take a leave of absence to pursue the subject of his fellowship, "The Discipline of Public Reason," and act as a fellow at the National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park.

He said UNC professors' ability to receive the award looks good for the school as a whole.

"It shows that the University has people on this faculty recognized for scholastic excellence," Postema said. "I regard myself as very lucky and greatly honored."

He said the program gives a small number of fellowships across the country and in a large range of disciplines.

"This is an extremely prestigious fellowship," he said. "It is a very

broadly based academic program and is extremely competitive."

Postema said his fellowship has both a historical and contemporary focal point.

"I hope to better understand the nature of practical reasoning as it was understood in the common law tradition to understand the idea of practical knowledge starting in the 17th century," he said.

Postema said his fellowship grew out of work he has done for a long time.

"I see this project as a culmination of thinking and speaking and writing on this topic, much of which has formed my teaching over the last two decades," he said.

Wegner said the fellowships are highly competitive awards that are quite highly regarded and handled on a national level.

"I think it's important for us to emphasize attention on the international issues set forth in these projects."

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