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On the Alcohol Policy

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Remember that quick email that everyone read back in August banning alcohol from our school's parties? The alcohol policy, to be more exact, prohibited hard liquor from campus, placed possession limits on lighter drinks, and banned those of age in first year dorms from having alcohol. People complained and worried about the policy. Over five hundred students signed a petition demanding a re-review of the policy. At this point in the year, we must ask: what has changed?

At least for the month of September, students over 21 were quite frustrated. At 21, many felt that they should be able to drink what they wanted where they wanted, especially given that Hobart and William Smith Colleges is not a dry campus. Meaning, that if a student is of age, they can sit in their dorm room and drink a beer; if this standard is upheld for beer, then they should be able to drink a whiskey sour as well.

The problem with the alcohol policy is that it is unrealistic and not taken seriously by students. I honestly thought I would hear more banter from the faculty or the campus safety officers, but it turns out that after a few weeks, no one even seemed to care. People were still having parties and still drinking alcohol. And can you blame them?

One change I have noticed is that campus safety busts more parties. Last year this was the case, but it didn't happen as often. Or maybe it

was that last year, once campus safety busted one place they would usually stop, and everyone would move somewhere else. Everyone would still have a place to go.

One other thing that has changed is that, according to the Director for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, Brittany Broderick, there have been fewer transports this year, and the severity of these transports is down.

According to the records, the number of incident reports is the same. I'm assuming incident reports meaning the number of kids getting written up has stayed the same, and honestly I am not surprised.

The only time campus safety should be involved is when students are actually in danger. When a student is caught throwing up in the bathroom of their floor, then there is a reason to call the authorities and make sure they are all right. That being said, campus safety coming through the basement of a frat house because it is too noisy does not help anyone. This actually makes the situation worse, because when students are forced outside with open containers they are able to get arrested. This is where campus safety shouldn't be intervening. They know students are going to drink on the weekends and it is really the students' responsibility to be safe.

At this point in the semester the alcohol policy is something that students laugh at. And they have every right to.

Trying to ban 21-year-olds from drinking hard liquor is quite a silly request, and I'm not sure what they thought they would get

out of it. Would less 21 year-olds be serving underage students? Because that certainly has not happened. It is still just as easy for an 18- or 20-year-old to get their hands on a bottle of rum this year as it was last year. Being careful and knowing how to handle your alcohol is a personal issue, and not one that the school should constantly be on the hunt to fix. The administration should trust the students, and should not try to ban alcohol for students that are responsible drinkers.

If a student is going to get drunk to the point where they need to be transported, or if they are breaking the law, that is their own fault and not something the school should try to prevent. Campus safety should only be getting involved when there is danger to the student and the school. When alcohol poisoning becomes threatening, or even something like sexual assault. This is when the school should be involved.

This is the only solution that might seem reasonable, and it would teach students to not worry about places to party, and to actually trust campus safety. Right now, it is worse that you might have alcohol in your fridge, than if someone pulled a knife on you.

Creating new policies that exert force to change drinking habits do not create the impact that the school may have wanted. The thing is, college students will always drink. Students are adults; this is college; a wider education focus on the difference between safe and dangerous drinking is more appropriate to solve the problem that we face.