Dear Stanford Parent/Guardian,

We write to share Stanford's efforts to educate students about alcohol and drug issues, and we look forward to your partnership with the university in ensuring the health and safety of your student. We encourage you to talk to them early and often about alcohol and drug use.

There are many groups at Stanford reaching out to you at this point. We thank you for taking the time to read this important letter.

**Access to Alcohol**

Although the legal drinking age in California is 21, access to alcohol can be a reality of life at Stanford, just as it is at colleges and universities nationwide. The good news is that surveys show many Stanford students drink moderately to not at all. Nevertheless, every year a number of undergraduates are involved in high-risk drinking incidents. First-year students are particularly at risk. Many have had little experience with alcohol and are unprepared for the freedoms of college.

Research shows that by having a frank, face-to-face conversation, you can have a positive impact on your student’s approach to alcohol and drugs once they arrive. This year, we have created a new Parent/Guardian Guide with information, tips, conversation starters, and resources to help you get the most out of your conversations about alcohol with your college student. This can be found at https://alcohol.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj10421/f/parentguardian_guide_final_0.pdf

Here are six things we want you to know about Stanford's programs and policies:

1. Students are expected to abide by university policies and California laws. These can be found at https://alcohol.stanford.edu/home/stanford-university-student-alcohol-policy

2. Before they arrive on campus, students will be required to take an online alcohol education course that stresses individual and collective responsibility. Your student received the information about the course on Friday August 16th.

3. Stanford's Office of Alcohol Policy and Education oversees policy, education and Cardinal Nights social programs, which are alcohol-free events (https://alcohol.stanford.edu/cardinal-nights/about-cardinal-nights) designed so that no student feels isolated by a decision to abstain from drinking alcohol.

4. 24/7 support is available in the residence halls from student resident assistants (RAs) and student peer health educators (PHEs), as well as professional residence deans, alcohol and drug educators and academic directors. Vaden Health Center offers professional counseling, medical services and health promotion. https://vaden.stanford.edu/

5. Marijuana (cannabis in all forms) is prohibited on the Stanford campus, regardless of a California state law (Prop 64) that legalized recreational use and possession for people 21 years of age and older. Since Stanford receives federal funding, the university must abide by federal law that still defines marijuana as an illicit drug. https://alcohol.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/stanford_university_marijuana_policy_statement_november_2016.pdf
6. Stanford has a host of educational offerings for students regarding alcohol and other drugs.
   https://alcohol.stanford.edu/

**Negative Impacts of Drinking Alcohol**
We encourage you to discuss the negative impacts of binge drinking with your student. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism offers the following information and advice for parents.

Here are three specific points to emphasize:

1. Drinking hard liquor in the form of shots is dangerous and can lead to alcohol poisoning and death. We know your student is smart, and we believe that they will understand the hazards of consuming large amounts of hard liquor over a short period of time. Read more at https://alcohol.stanford.edu/alcohol-drug-info/staying-safe/alcohol-overdosepoisoning

2. Excessive drinking can -and does- result in arrest. Stanford students are not immune from prosecution and are commonly cited for a) being a minor in possession of alcohol; b) being intoxicated in public, which could involve being arrested and taken to jail or a sobering station; and c) possession of false identification.

3. Violations of campus community standards, such as sexual assault and misconduct, often involve excessive alcohol use. While alcohol does not cause or excuse acts of sexual violence, it can be used to facilitate assaultive behavior. We encourage parents/guardians and students to educate themselves on our policies and procedures and to utilize campus resources to help prevent and address these issues. More information on sexual assault support and resources can be found at https://sexualviolencesupport.stanford.edu/

We believe firmly that if you talk with your student about substance use before they come to Stanford, you can help us create a campus culture of personal responsibility and good decision-making.

**Keep Talking**
But don’t stop there. After your student has been at Stanford, continue the conversation. Ask, “What did you do last night?” “What fun things are you finding to do?” “Tell me about your friends.”

The answers will help reveal if your student is feeling isolated and, thus, vulnerable. In our experience, parents/guardians are best able to detect if something is amiss.

Thank you for your partnership in this effort. Curbing irresponsible use of alcohol and drugs is a high priority for Stanford. Please contact the Office of Alcohol Policy and Education at 650-725-5947 if you need more information or have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Susie Brubaker-Cole
Vice Provost for Student Affairs
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