

Good Samaritan Policy will build trust between University, students

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Published: Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Updated: Wednesday, March 3, 2010

The Student Government Association recently passed a resolution to encourage West Virginia University to pass a Good Samaritan Policy when it came to calling for help in alcohol-related situations.

Such a policy would mean students calling police or paramedics for an alcohol-related emergency would not be in legal trouble.

When this idea is actually presented to University administrators, the only real question will have to be why they had not thought of this before.

This policy is an essential part of building trust between the University and its students.

Students should know it is possible to approach the University and other officials for help without repercussions.

The problems that may arise from not having this policy far outweigh any possible issues it may cause.

Some people will disagree with this policy, dismissing it as giving students a free pass when they have done wrong. This is as far from the truth as can be, though.

These types of policies are not meant as a "Get out of Jail Free" card. They are developed in order to ensure the student body stays as safe as possible, even when the students are acting outside the rules.

A Good Samaritan Policy in no way means the average student trying to sneak alcohol into the dorms or coming back drunk and belligerent will not be punished.

It does mean, however, those students who go a little overboard or make some extremely bad choices will receive the help they need as quickly as possible.

Imagine the current situation.

You are out drinking with some of your friends and roommates and you return to your dorm for the night.

You go to the bathroom, then walk into your room, only to find your roommate passed out on the floor. You can't wake him up. He could have alcohol poisoning, he may not.

What do you do?

With the current policy, going to get help could mean you get punished, even though you are trying to help someone.

What is more important? Helping your friend or keeping yourself out of trouble?

The answer should be obvious, but after a night of drinking and worrying about what might happen, you may hesitate, or worse, just try and let them sleep it off.

This situation is entirely realistic and completely unfair.

It is not only unfair to the person getting help, but to the person who needs medical attention.

It can be argued they shouldn't have gone out and drank so much that they need help, but that argument isn't going to change the fact that it's going to happen.

Students on this campus are always going to go out and drink on the weekends, and there are more than enough of them who are underage.

There is no real way to change that. The likelihood those who need it will get help can be changed, however.

An amnesty program for those who call for help not only makes it more fair for those who would always make the call, but will also encourage more students to act rather than hesitate or ignore the problem.

Being able to trust the University knows you are making a smart decision and do not deserve to be punished for it is a crucial step in building a safer University.

Otherwise, students will continue to be afraid to call for help, and those who need help will be the ones truly being punished.