

# Coalition Corner



## URI Substance Abuse Prevention: Where We Were and Where We are Going

In 1993 and 1994, the *Princeton Review* named the University of Rhode Island the number one party school in America. It is from this dubious distinction that the University, under the leadership of President Robert Carothers in conjunction with several partners, undertook a variety of programs to minimize the effects of substance abuse within the University communities, on and off campus.

In a presentation given by Daniel Graney, Director of Substance Abuse Prevention Services in the URI Office of Student Life, at last week's Narragansett-URI Narragansett-URI Coalition meeting, members saw and heard firsthand an overview of the many positive steps the university has taken over the last decade and a half.

Highlights include the ban on alcohol being served at all University social functions, instituting a "3 Strikes and Out" policy with regards to alcohol and substance abuse situations, adding birth dates to Student ID's, and most recently, increasing the jurisdiction of the University's Code of Conduct policies to cover off-campus behavior.

In addition to these and other internal policy changes, the University has partnered with several local and national organizations to foster positive relationships and to fund many of the current programs utilized today.

Since 1990 URI has received nearly \$8 million towards it's research, and within the last two years the University has created the Common Ground, a project that has brought together several groups and programs specifically designed to implement and evaluate environmental management strategies related to alcohol access, policy and law enforcement coupled with an aggressive marketing campaign.

Several organizations had already come together to address these issues, including the Narragansett-URI Coalition, the Greek Advisory Committee and the University's "A-Team" (alcohol team) an interdisciplinary group comprised of faculty and administrators. These groups, working together with Common Ground, have enabled community leaders, university officials, Narragansett residents and the student population to enhance the lines of communication. Together these groups have taken significant steps to increase awareness, foster collaborative efforts to combat the issues facing Narragansett and the University and to collectively minimize the number of incidents on and off campus.

A number of major steps have been taken within recent months to facilitate proactive ways to reduce alcohol related incidents including the "Rhode Map to Safety" media campaign which targets university students and the community at large through multiple outlets, the Cooperating Tavern/Package Store Owners Agreements in Narragansett and South Kingstown and several on-campus workshops all intended to educate students about their responsibilities as tenants and residents in the communities.

The necessity for URI students to assimilate into our local communities and to help support the local economies is vital to the welfare of Narragansett and South Kingstown. Utilization of the tools already in place, the creation of new techniques to educate residents and students and the willingness of all the groups involved to better our co-existence will provide a valuable model for other college communities to copy.

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