



August 2011

Dear parent or guardian,

Welcome to Boston University! I am very pleased that you and your Boston University student will be joining our community this fall.

As your student prepares to head off to Boston, I have some very important and serious information to share about an issue that affects just about every college campus in the United States: the use and abuse of alcohol by students. Alcohol abuse by college students results in negative consequences—among them poor academic performance, blackouts, fights, injuries, alcohol poisoning, physical and sexual assaults, legal problems, alcohol-related driving accidents, hospitalization, and sometimes even death.

While binge drinking and the associated risks only affect a very small number of students, the fact is that over the course of a year approximately 1,700 students in the United States will literally drink themselves to death. This past academic year, approximately 250 Boston University students were transported to local hospitals for acute intoxication. The majority of them were freshmen.

In Massachusetts an individual must be at least 21 years old to consume or procure alcohol. Boston University collaborates with local law enforcement, and if a student is cited by a local police agency, he or she will be subject to our campus judicial processes as well. Consequences for alcohol misuse can include substantial fines, mandated counseling, possible removal from housing, or suspension from the University. If a student is transported to a hospital for intoxication, parents or guardians typically will be notified. In addition, the student will go through our disciplinary process. Information about Boston University's alcohol policy is available on the Dean of Students website at www.bu.edu/dos/policies.

This year, as we prepare to welcome the Class of 2015 to campus, we wish to engage you directly. With this letter, we are encouraging all parents and guardians of incoming students to talk with their student about alcohol use while in college. There are several important things to consider when approaching this topic:

- **The transition from high school to college provides an optimal time period to talk about this issue with your son or daughter.**
- **Research suggests that discussions immediately prior to the start of college lead to lower alcohol consumption during the first year.**
- **Talking with your daughter or son about the dangers of binge drinking lowers the risk that she or he will experience serious alcohol-related consequences.**

We encourage you to take an active role and to communicate directly with your student. Enclosed you will find a handout that can help you to start this conversation. For more information, please go to www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov, a site of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

In late September, your first-year student will be asked to complete our **iHealth** profile. We ask you to encourage your student to complete this brief online survey that provides personalized feedback about alcohol use, risk factors, and protective behaviors.

As a parent of two young people who have already gone through the transition from high school to college, I ask you to speak with your child. This conversation can be the first step to lowering the risk of alcohol abuse.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "B".

Robert A. Brown



August 2011

Dear parent or guardian,

I am delighted to welcome you and your new Boston University student to our community!

Now that your student is here in Boston, I am sure that you will be speaking with him or her by telephone or email occasionally to help ease the transition from home to university life. I would like to ask you to discuss with your student during one of these conversations an important issue that affects students on every college campus in the United States: the use and abuse of alcoholic beverages.

I realize that some of our new students come from countries where it is common for young people to drink wine at family meals, and other students come from countries where the use of alcohol is frowned upon for everyone. I also know that many first-year college students can be tempted to drink to excess, whatever their background. We appreciate all that you have done thus far to raise your child, and we are asking you to have one more conversation with your student about this important issue.

It is important for our international students to understand the legal and cultural expectations, as well as the risks, connected with alcohol use in this country. In the United States, a person must be at least 21 years old to purchase alcohol legally. Boston University cooperates with local law enforcement agencies, and when students are cited by a local police department, they also will be subject to our campus judicial processes.

Alcohol abuse by college students can result in poor academic performance, physical and sexual assaults, accidents, hospitalization, arrests, and sometimes even death. This past academic year, 250 Boston University students were transported to local hospitals for acute intoxication. The majority of them were first-year students.

Consequences for alcohol misuse can include substantial fines, mandated counseling, possible removal from campus housing, or suspension from the University. Information about Boston University's alcohol policy is available on the Dean of Students website at www.bu.edu/dos/policies/lifebook/drugs-alcohol.

Parents can play an important role by discussing this issue with their students and encouraging them to behave properly and remain safe, especially when they attend student gatherings where alcohol is available.

In late September, your first-year student will be asked to complete our online **iHealth** profile. We ask you to encourage your student to fill out this brief survey that provides personalized feedback about alcohol use, risk factors, and protective behaviors.

As a parent of two young people who have already gone through this transition from high school to college, I ask you to discuss this with your child. This conversation can be an important step in lowering the risk of alcohol abuse.

Yours truly,

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